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Francis Rabelais

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

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A Seventeenth-Century Portrait of Rabelais

UNIV. OF MICH.

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FRANCIS RABELAIS

The Man and His Work

By

ALBERT JAY NOCK, M.A., LITT.D.
and
C. R. WILSON, M.A. (OXON.)

ILLUSTRATED

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
New York and London
1929

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Preface

IT IS fair to say that a proper study of the sixteenth century in Western Europe has only begun. Within the last twenty-five years, historians have laboured to penetrate beyond the "wild and dreamlike trade of blood and guile" which has long passed current as the substance of history—the doings and misdoings of kings, nobles, priests, soldiers and politicians—and to arrive at some account of the great majority, the masses of people who were not nobles or politicians, but who had each one twenty-four hours a day to get through with in some fashion or other, who had each one to have food, clothing and shelter, and some means of getting them, who had each one some sort of thought, fancy, prepossession in his mind, some sort of affection and sensibility; and who, in consequence of all these attributes, these needs and desires, created for themselves some kind of social life. In this view of its history, the sixteenth century is as yet, and perhaps will always largely remain, an immense confusion and tangle, requiring the freest possible use of the scientific imagination to assist, to stimulate, and

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in large measure to direct, the work of scientific inquiry and research.

Under these circumstances it is not strange that so little is known of the personal life of those who in the long run have been established by the general reason and spirit of mankind as the really great men of this period. Three of the four greatest creative literary geniuses that the whole Christian era has produced, were produced in this century; Cervantes in Spain, Shakespeare in England, Rabelais in France. Yet relatively little is known of Cervantes's personal life, almost nothing of Rabelais's, and nothing significant of Shakespeare's. Conjecture has been busy with all three, and properly so; the aid and stimulus of rational hypothesis in the search for truth is immeasurable. One may say in paraphrase of Bishop Butler that probability is the guide of research; and this is true in spite of the fact that conjecture, like any double-edged instrument, becomes mischievous in unskilled hands. Uncritical conjecture has had its share in reconstructing these three figures as they now stand before us, whereby Shakespeare has probably suffered most, Rabelais nearly as much. But the figure of Rabelais has of late been cleared of a great deal of the most obvious conjectural defilement, and also in certain regions of outline it has been "restored," to borrow the architectural term, with considerable verisimilitude, although it still remains for the most part indistinct and

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probably much distorted. An authentic biography of Cervantes, based on our present knowledge, might amount to four pages; of Rabelais, perhaps two; of Shakespeare, one. All that is actually known of Shakespeare might be written on a postcard, with room to spare.

In the reconstruction of Rabelais as a figure in history, and the re-presentation of his writings, the work of the Rabelais Society, or to give it its proper name, the *Société des Études Rabelaisiennes*, stands pre-eminent. It is impossible to overpraise this association; it is one of the few that have ever grouped around a great man's name, and really accomplished anything. We wish to speak particularly of its achievements, since they are so little known in America even by those few to whom Rabelais is something more than a name improperly associated with a type of literature usually classed as objectionable. The Society was formed twenty-seven years ago in Paris; where it has worked ever since upon its *magnum opus*, now approaching completion, its great critical edition, the first ever produced, and as nearly definitive, perhaps, as one will ever be, of the works of Rabelais; and it has also published a quarterly review, which was at first a general forum for Rabelaisian studies, and was subsequently enlarged in scope to cover critical and historical studies of the sixteenth century at large. The impetus thus given to interest in this period, and the scholarly direction given

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to its study, are of immeasurable importance. In considering the devoted labours of the editors of the Society's critical edition, one is profoundly impressed by the rare combination of historical scholarship with high literary skill, unfailingly set forth in the work of M. Plattard; the philological attainments of M. Sainéan; the distinguished literary discipline which qualifies M. Boulenger as a textual critic; the eminence of M. Dorveaux in natural science; the elaborate acquaintance of M. Clouzot with folk-lore and tradition; and the executive ability displayed by the general editor of the enterprise, M. Lefranc. More than by all these, however, one is impressed by the excellent sense of harmony, balance, and proportion pervading the work, the rigorous accommodation of enthusiasm to the dictates of scientific reason and judgment. Hereafter if a commentator on Rabelais, whatever his nationality or language, acknowledges his literary obligations in detail, the name of the Society, or of some one of its five hundred members, must appear at the end of every sentence that he writes. For our part, gladly anticipating this necessity, we here acknowledge our own obligations in sum.

II

A word or two about Rabelais's family, its standing and connexions, may, we think, more properly be

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brought in here than in the body of our essay. Meagre as they are, the records are enough to permit the piecing-out of a fairly definite genealogy. The family appears to have been one of plain people, no doubt of peasant stock, and of rather recent graduation into the land-holding class. For some time the French bourgeois had been regularly recruited from the peasantry. It had long been by no means an unknown thing for a peasant family to get enough together wherewith to pick up a bit of land here and there, perhaps from some noble whose fortunes had more or less gone to pieces in the Crusades or in the foreign wars; and thus in the course of two or three generations, possibly with an advantageous marriage thrown in now and then, to achieve the first step towards a rise in the world. The next step was to acquire a town-property, thereby coming into the status and rights of the town-dweller or *bourgeois*, these rights including the important right to hold "noble" lands as well as common lands. The last step was to enter the ranks of the nobility full-fledged, by acquiring feudal lands and the purchase of a feudal title. This progress was not essentially dissimilar to that whereby such rights are now acquired in countries where they are still to be had. The Rabelais family evidently went some way along it, and rather rapidly. There is nowhere, so far discovered, any mention of the family name of Rabelais earlier than 1457, when a certain Guillaume Rabelais is noted in a

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rent-declaration as a tenant of the abbey of Seuilly. It is but half a century later, however, that we find the family living in affluence in the same district, the environs of Chinon, a town in the Touraine, about thirty miles southwest of the city of Tours.

Indeed, in the year 1500 they were extremely well-to-do; for provincial people, one could call them rich, remembering that in those days wealth was all in tangible property, not in securities or credits. The family had a very big town-house in Chinon, at no. 15 rue de la Lamproie, and two, perhaps three, smaller properties on another street, now called the rue Haute-Saint-Maurice. Outside the town, they owned the excellent farm-property of la Devinière, about four miles southwest of Chinon, and also that of la Pomardière, about a mile and a half further on in the same direction. They had several other rural holdings as well. Through the double accident of marriage and birth, the "noble" estate of Chavigny-en-vallée also came into the family. This lay a little to the northwest of Chinon, about ten miles distant, at the point where the little river Vienne joins the Loire. Andrée Pavin, daughter of the lord of this estate, married a Rabelais whose given name is unknown; its initial was N. By him she had one child, Antoine, who at her death became her principal heir, and as such came into the "*chastel et maison noble*" of Chavigny, with all the rights of "seigneury, fief, justice, jurisdiction, rents and

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duties, fields, fisheries and pastures." At this time Francis Rabelais was about ten years old.

Thus Antoine Rabelais became in a sense the founder, or perhaps one may say the point of precipitation, of the family's fortunes. The date of his birth is unknown; he died in 1535. There are some reasons for supposing that he lived mostly on his farm-property at la Devinière, at least in his earlier days, before the death of his mother redistributed his responsibilities in 1505; and he may possibly have kept to it as his favourite residence afterwards. He was largely occupied in Chinon, however, as a practicing lawyer, and later also as an executive. He is set forth in a document of 1518 as a "licentiate in law, counsellor and advocate in the court of Chinon"; and by 1527 he had become the town's senior practitioner, as is shown in a decree of the Parlement of Paris, published on the twenty-fourth of May of that year, giving him an interim appointment as administrative head of the district, pending the election of a new lieutenant.

Antoine Rabelais had three sons, Antoine jr., Jamet and Francis, and one daughter Françoise. It is probable, though by no means certain, that Francis was the youngest of the four. If so, he affords a conspicuous example of the strange fact that has so much interested some students of heredity, that the youngest child in a family is often the ablest. Francis Rabelais was born at Chinon, or more probably at la Devinière, and to the

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best of our present knowledge, in the year 1495. He died in Paris at the age of fifty-eight, and was buried either in the church of St. Paul or in the church's graveyard. The church's mortuary records are now lost, but an eighteenth-century copy contains the entry, "François Rabelais, dead at the age of seventy years, rue des Jardins, 9 april 1553, has been buried in the cemetery of St. Paul." The date of death here given is no doubt correct, as it is corroborated by a statement antedating the copy, in the preface to an edition of some letters which Rabelais wrote from Italy; but the age given is open to serious question, and has been all but universally repudiated. There are almost insuperable critical difficulties in the way of assuming that Francis Rabelais was born as early as 1483, and since this document is the only actual evidence in support of such an assumption, it is more reasonable to suppose either that the original entry was in error or that the copyist made a mistake.

These genealogical discoveries are the fruit of recent research. They seem definitely to dispose of certain traditions that grew up quite early around the figure of Rabelais, and that have met with general acceptance, in default of better knowledge. One is that Francis Rabelais was the son of an apothecary. There were indeed two apothecaries in the family, the first one being Thomas Rabelais, nephew of Francis (he was the son of Francis's oldest brother Antoine), who was

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Farmhouse of la Devinière, probable birthplace of Rabelais

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apothecary at Chinon, and died at some time before 1577. His son Antoine, third of that name, is cited as "master-apothecary and administrator of the Hôtel-Dieu of Chinon," evidently an important citizen; he died in the late months of 1614, or early in 1615. Thus the legend concerning Francis Rabelais probably rose from a confusion caused by there being two apothecaries and three Antoines—father, son, and great-grandson—in the line of primogeniture.

Another tradition is that Francis Rabelais was the son of an innkeeper at Chinon, at no. 2 rue de la Lamproie, and that he grew up to the music of clinking pots, and the laughter of roistering peasants. Like the foregoing legend, it has not the slightest supporting evidence; and it, too, probably took its rise from confusion. There was an inn on the family property at no. 15 rue de la Lamproie, but it was not set up until 1590, almost half a century after Francis Rabelais's death. At some time in the eighteenth century the inn was moved from no. 15 to no. 2, on the same street; and this no doubt gave rise to the collateral legend that no. 2, not no. 15, was the family's property. It is still popularly designated as such, though without justification.

Rather curiously, since he rose to unusual eminence in his period, no authentic portrait of Rabelais has come down to our times. If any was ever made, it has been lost or remains unidentified. M. Faguet says that at

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the age of thirty, Rabelais was "tall, of a fine figure, very handsome, with a strong forehead, prominent and forceful cheek-bones, and magnificent eyes." Early in the last century one of the members of the Faculty of Medicine at Montpelier described him in somewhat similar terms, as "of a noble and majestic bearing, with handsome and regular features, and his fresh and florid complexion enhanced by a fine golden-brown beard. His face bespoke intelligence, his eyes were kindly and his expression gentle, though serious and reflective." Unfortunately there seems to be no authority for all this; one can find but little of it in the earliest portraits available, though it must be said that none of them are early enough to make their evidence worth anything. We have reproduced one of the Seventeenth Century as a frontispiece, and the one that appears on the opposite page is supposed by critics to have the best chance, though very slight, at some kind of authenticity. Really, no one knows anything about the matter, or can have any idea of what he looked like. The more recent portraits, busts and statues are of course wholly fanciful, and they usually reflect the current tradition concerning his personality. The bust on the little public square at Meudon is a satisfactory exception. The sight of it is well worth the twenty-minute ride from the Montparnasse Station, for it represents Rabelais quite as one would be glad to believe he looked.

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III

These few statistical details, well got out of the way at the moment, are enough by way of preliminary to introducing the subject in its larger historical setting. It remains here to say a word about the peculiar, the extraordinary, one may almost say the providential accessibility to the spirit, mind, and temper of Rabelais, that may be enjoyed by the English-speaking reader;

The Portrait of Rabelais which is supposed to have the best claim to authenticity

for Rabelais found translators who were truly after his own heart. He had to wait a hundred years for them, but they were worth waiting for.

One of them was a much-travelled native of Cromartyshire in Scotland, Sir Thomas Urquhart, baronet and physician, educated at the University of Aberdeen. He was born in 1611; and in his wanderings he had the works of Rabelais always with him, meditating on them long and profoundly, and producing piecemeal a translation of the first three books, which was published

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in instalments forty years apart, the First and Second Book in 1653, and the Third posthumously in 1693. Fortunately for his enterprise, he had the benefit of the great French-English dictionary of Cotgrave, the first of its kind, which for its time was a practical Rabelaisian glossary, and remains in all respects one of the most remarkable of lexicographical achievements; it appeared in London in 1611, the year of Sir Thomas Urquhart's birth. Cotgrave's phraseology is by far the richest and most spirited ever employed in such a work, and Urquhart had the fine literary sense to transfer much of it bodily to his translation.

The Fourth and Fifth Books were translated by Peter le Motteux, a merchant of French origin who spent his adult life in London; and the complete translation was published for the first time in 1708, with very moderate success, only four editions appearing in the eighteenth century, and nine in the nineteenth. Except on the score of accuracy, the work of le Motteux is thought by some critics to compare unfavourably with that of his predecessor. M. Sainéan, for example, regards it as quite devoid of personality and style, which are, he says, the two qualities that distinguish the work of Urquhart. It seems to us that this language is a great deal too hard. Some inferiority there may be, but we must say that we do not find ourselves appreciably let down in our transition from the one translator to the other, and moreover, we can cite whole sec-

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Bust of Rabelais at Meudon

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tions in which it seems to us that for force, personality, and style, le Motteux, to say the least, perfectly stands comparison with Sir Thomas Urquhart. Such passages are the whole story of Panurge's chaffering with Dingdong; the whole episode of the island of Papimany; the stories told apropos of Panurge's fright, off the island of Ganabim; and the chapters on the Furred Law-cats. In these passages and many others, we do not see how the work of translation could be carried on more forcefully, in better style; or how it could admit the display of stronger personality.

The English reader has here one of the three or four translations that appear in our literature as masterworks in themselves, having a distinct physiognomy of their own, and that physiognomy so acceptable, so satisfying, that by them one fully attains the major aims of reading a classic, and except for collateral purposes may contentedly permit the originals to repose upon the shelf. Such translations are very few; as we have said, we know of but three or four in our language. The King James version of the Bible is of course the great example; the Urquhart and le Motteux Rabelais, and the old translation of Don Quixote (in which le Motteux had a great hand) follow close upon it; and an occasional shorter work, like Mr. Long's translations of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus (we can think of no other at the moment) shares their qualities in its degree.

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It must be laid down once and for all, that the chief purpose of reading a classic like Rabelais is to prop and stay the spirit, especially in its moments of weakness and enervation, against the stress of life, to elevate it above the reach of commonplace annoyances and degradations, and to purge it of despondency and cynicism. He is to be read as Homer, Sophocles, the English Bible, are to be read. *Felix ille,* as Erasmus said of the Bible, *felix ille quem in hisce litteris meditantem mors occupat.* The current aspect of our planet, and the performances upon it, are not always encouraging, and one therefore turns with unspeakable gratitude to those who themselves have been able to contemplate them with equanimity, and are able to help others do so. In their writings one sees how the main preoccupations, ambitions, and interests of mankind appear when regarded "in the view of eternity," and one is insensibly led to make that view one's own. Thus Rabelais is one of the half-dozen writers whose spirit in a conspicuous way pervades and refreshes one's being, tempers, steadies, and sweetens it, so that one lays the book aside conscious of a new will to live up to the best of one's capacity, and a clearer apprehension of what that best may be. An unexampled power to render just this service is what has made the English Bible the book of books to all sorts and conditions of men, even when most ignorantly and unintelligently used. It is what, too, will unfailingly bring men back to

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the Bible after however long and justifiable exasperation with its misuse has kept them away from it; and so will it bring men back, after long misapprehension, misuse, or neglect, to other literature which in its degree has the same power.

But the communication of this spirit through the printed word depends largely on the presence of one of the most delicate and evanescent of qualities, which is literary charm; and in a translation, this quality is often unreproducible. Read, for example, the Apology of Socrates in the original, and then again in the best obtainable translation, the best translation that one can make for oneself—the charm is departed, it is not there. A translation with which the scholar may find some small measure of fault, but which nevertheless does succeed in reproducing this quality, is therefore better for the primary purpose of reading than one which comes nearer meeting the exactions of the scholar, but from which this quality is absent. We plain people do not live to read—that is the scholar's business—but we read, or should read, to live; and a classic given us in such form that it helps us live, is more serviceable *for us* than if its form betokens a different primary function, excellent and laudable as that function may be. Again, the classical reference is to the Bible. The King James Version has inaccuracies which have been corrected in the Revised Version; yet who reads the Revised Version—indeed, who could

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be induced to read it, for purposes of edification, if he could get his hands on the other? One does not disparage the importance of scholarly accuracy; it is unthinkable that one should do so. One merely suggests a reasonable discrimination in the interest of what is most practical for the primary purpose that classic literature serves. Other things being equal, it is important for us to know, for instance, that Simeon and Levi were to blame, not because "in their self-will they digged down a wall," but because "in their wantonness they hamstrung oxen"; or that Joshua said to the sun and moon, *Be dark*, and not, *Stand still;* or that the verse of the psalm which forms a part of the Church of England's daily services should read, "It is He that has made us, and *we are His*," rather than, "It is He that hath made us, and *not we ourselves*." But here, as in any practical dealing with a great classic, the question is one of relative, not absolute importance. We must above all things observe that the importance of this knowledge is scientific, and that it is not primarily for scientific purposes, but for religious purposes, that the Bible is to be read. Therefore it becomes even more important that we should be without this knowledge, than that we should gain it at the expense of any, even the slightest, silting-up of the main channels of communication whereby the spirit of the Bible reaches ours; and literary charm is one of these main channels, and of all, perhaps, the most easily obstructed.

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IV

On the theory that "fidelity" in a translation implies as nearly as possible a verbal copy of the original, the version of Urquhart and le Motteux is open to objection to about the extent, probably, that the King James Version may be open to objection. On the theory that a translation should as far as possible reproduce upon its readers the total effect produced by the original upon *its* readers, it is almost as successful and meritorious as the King James Version; and, with this one great exception, more so than any other translation in our language. Indeed, if we were disposed to quibble, we could make out a respectable claim for it as even more successful than the King James Version, on account of the latter's mode of dealing with the poetical books and passages which in their sum make up a considerable part of the Scriptural text. But this would be disingenuous, because on account of differences, both in genius and structure, between the two languages, the total effect of a passage of Hebrew poetry--the prophecies of Balaam, for example—is quite unreproducible in any translation. It is just these differences in genius and structure that must so largely be taken into account in measuring the excellence of the Urquhart and le Motteux version. On the one theory of translation, for example, the reader may look askance

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at Urquhart and le Motteux for their frequent use of synonyms and explicative additions; but it must be remembered that they were translating from a language of extreme strictness in definition, and rather poor in synonyms, into another which is incalculably rich in synonyms and of great suppleness in definition; and hence that the total effect of a French sentence or paragraph may be utterly lost if one render it in English merely by moulding the words of one language by the genius of the other. The use of occasional amplification may be similarly defended. More than any other French writer, as M. Plattard has acutely remarked, Rabelais gives the impression of *the spoken word;* and in translating him into English, it would be impossible to reproduce this impression without resorting to just the devices which Urquhart and le Motteux employ. One may, indeed, sum up the whole matter by saying boldly that the question is not one of producing a French Rabelais in English, but of producing an English Rabelais.

This is what the Elizabethan translators have succeeded in doing. A most excellent translation on the more conventional principle was produced in 1893 by Mr. W. F. Smith, of St. John's College, Cambridge. It stands in relation to the Elizabethan translation as the Revised Version stands to the King James Version, and those readers who are desirous of seeing the best, probably, that can be done with this great task under

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the two theories of translation, may easily satisfy themselves by comparing these two renderings at almost any page. The discernment of comparative literary values is so interesting, the questions involved in their establishment are so precise, that we cannot abstain from bringing together here a few lines from each version, by way of illustration and example. We have spoken of the difficulty of reproducing in a translation the literary charm that characterizes an original, and we have mentioned the delicacy and evanescence of this quality. To show how delicate and evanescent it is, we bring together a passage from the two versions, where the most insignificant of changes are at once seen to be sufficient to take the rendering entirely out of the spirit of the original. In the passage introducing Friar John into the narrative, Urquhart has this:

There was then in the abbey a claustral monk called Friar John of the Funnels, young, gallant, frisk, lusty, nimble, quick, active, bold, adventurous, resolute, tall, lean, wide-mouthed, long-nosed, a rare mumbler of matins, unbridler of masses, and runner-over of vigils; and to conclude summarily, in a word, a right monk, if ever there were any, since the monking world monked a monkery.

Smith renders the passage thus:

In the abbey at that time was a cloistered monk named Friar John of the Trencherites, young, gallant, frisky, lusty, very handy, bold, adventurous, resolute, tall, lean, with a rare gaping mouth and a mighty prominent nose, a fine mumbler of matins, unbridler of masses, and a scourer of

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vigils; to say everything summarily, a very monk, if ever there was one, since the monking world monked a monkery.

The charm—the pre-eminent charm of Rabelais, the charm of *the spoken word*—is gone. Reading the two passages aloud leaves no doubt of it; yet how insignificant are the differences between them! Smith says in his preface that although he made his translation independently, he compared it paragraph by paragraph with its predecessor, and "without hesitation a happy turn or rare word has been adopted from the old rendering." The foregoing shows this clearly, but it also shows as clearly the sacrifice that the reader must nevertheless be prepared to make in the interest of what conventionally passes for accuracy. The one version is that of Rabelais writing in English for English readers; the other is an excellent, a superexcellent, copy of Rabelais writing in French for French readers.

Let us give one more example which, on the other hand, shows Urquhart at his freest in the use of synonyms and amplifications, and therefore shows perhaps as great a diversity as exists anywhere between the two versions. When the sibyl of Panzoult had completed her incantations before advising Panurge about his marriage —

Hereupon she set up a most hideous cry, muttering between her teeth some barbarous words of a strange termination, insomuch that Panurge said to Epistemon, 'By the powers, I tremble and shake; I believe I am bewitched;

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she doth not talk Christian. Look how she seems to be four spans higher than she was when she hooded herself with her apron. What meaneth this wagging of her chaps? What is intended by this shrugging of her shoulders? To what end doth she quaver with her lips like an ape shelling shrimps? My ears tingle; I fancy I hear Proserpine blustering; the devils will soon break loose on the spot. O the ugly beasts! Let us fly. By the old serpent, I am like to die of fear; I love not these devils. They trouble me, and are unpleasant. Let us fly. Farewell, old lady. Grammercy for your kindness. I will not marry, no. I renounce it from this moment, as aforetimes.'

This is Smith's rendering, to which one must allow everything in the way of accuracy, and much in the way of force and spirit. But put beside it Urquhart's rendering, and no comment on the comparison is necessary.

Hereupon she gave a most hideous horribly dreadful shout, muttering betwixt her teeth some few barbarous words of a strange termination. This so terrified Panurge that he forthwith said to Epistemon, 'The devil mince me into a gallimaufry if I do not tremble for fear. I do not think but that I am now enchanted; for she uttereth not her voice in the terms of any Christian language. O look, I pray you, how she seemeth unto me to be by three full spans higher than she was when she began to hood herself with her apron. What meaneth this restless wagging of her slouchy chaps? What can be the signification of the uneven shrugging of her hulchy shoulders? To what end doth she quaver with her lips, like a monkey in the dismembering of a lobster? My ears through horror glow; ah, how they tingle! I think I hear the shrieking of

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Proserpine; the devils are breaking loose to be all here. O the foul, ugly and deformed beasts! Let us run away! By the hook of God, I am like to die for fear! I do not love the devils; they vex me, and are unpleasant fellows. Now let us fly, and betake us to our heels. Farewell, gammer; thanks and grammercy for your goods. I will not marry; no, believe me, I will not; I fairly quit my interest therein, and totally abandon and renounce it from this time forward, even as much as at present.'

V

We have gone through these few little formalities with our reader, not so much by way of defending our own use of what may be thought an antiquated version wherever we have occasion to quote the text of Rabelais, as to quicken his interest in that version, in the hope that he may come to see and prize it, as we do, as one of the principal possessions of English literature. We put it forward as, with one exception, the most conspicuous proof and example of what has been done with our language, and therefore may be done again. What Mérimée said of the original we may say of this translation, that "there is not a line of it but what offers a subject of meditation to any one who proposes to write our language." Charles Nodier copied the whole of Rabelais three times in manuscript, in order to learn something about the use of his native tongue; and everyone wishing to write English could do no better than copy this translation for exercise. It is the most prepossessing and positive of witnesses to the

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incomparable excellence and nobleness of the English tongue, its stupendous resources, its mighty competence and power as an instrument of expression for the human spirit. One cannot attentively read this version, we think, without an overmastering sense of what a priceless heritage we have in our language, and what a privilege it is to have a native use of it; and it is for this reason that we have ventured invariably to use this text for our quotations, and to recommend it above all others, even the original, to the English-speaking reader.

There are slight variants in the different issues of this text. Numerous cheap editions have from time to time been put on the market, and some lately that are more pretentious, which are reprints of one or another issue, and hence perpetuate these variants. One recent reprint, perhaps more—we have not seen them all—has even reproduced the Elizabethan spelling and capitalization, evidently following the scholarly reconstruction of the original text, made by Mr. Whibley in 1900. The variants, however, are very slight; they are worth a scholar's attention, no doubt, but otherwise they are not important. Our own interest has been simply to present the English text in the form that we found most readable. At the easiest, Rabelais is difficult enough for the English reader; with all the help one can get, he is obscure enough. One has to know a great deal about his times and circumstances to make much out of many of his pages. The history of his

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period is, as we have said, still very confused, and it lies off the main track of one's habitual reading and study. In all, there are plenty of natural obstacles in the English reader's way, without troubling to confront him with any artificial ones. Above all writers of the modern world, Rabelais should be dealt with in the simplest and most unprofessional terms, and the critical purpose uppermost in any dealing with him should be to make this truly modern figure well known in the sense that Shakespeare, Homer, and Sophocles are well known; known as an inexhaustible resource of reviving, healing, strengthening, and consoling, as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." To help him to be read with ease, delight, and understanding, to attract as many people as possible to him, to cause his views and words, as far as possible, *volitare per ora virûm*—this, rather than an academic concern with him as a mere literary exhibit, should be the main object of any presentation of Rabelais to English-speaking people. It is because we feel so strongly about this, and because we so much desire to keep steadfastly to this purpose, that we have reduced these necessary *præmonenda* to their minimum, and have chosen to compress them within the limits of a preface, rather than carry them over into the body of our essay.

A. J. N.
C. R. W.

Brussels, 14 November, 1928.

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Francis Rabelais

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Chapter One

THERE is no external evidence by which we may know anything of Francis Rabelais's early years. He makes his first appearance in documented history at the age of twenty-six, with a remarkably good education. He must have got the rudiments of this education somewhere, and judging by the depth and scope it shows at twenty-six, one would say he must have got them quite young. There is a tradition, more reasonable than most unsupported traditions are, that he first went to school to the Benedictine monks of the abbey of Seuilly. This establishment lay close to his birthplace, and his family had paid feudal allegiance and feudal dues to it for at least half a century, and no one knows how much longer. It was a venerable institution, having been founded towards the end of the eleventh century, and in the year 1500 it was prosperous, and owned a great deal of revenue-producing property. Since the Benedictine monks made a considerable specialty of conducting local schools in their monasteries, the abbey of Seuilly could hardly have been exceptional in not maintaining one. All these circum-

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stances make it highly probable that the child of a well-to-do local family, the son of a man of some importance in the district, would naturally, if he went to school at all, go there.

Another tradition, this time very doubtful, says that he went from the abbey of Seuilly while still in his boyhood, to continue his studies at the convent of the Observance de la Baumette, about a mile and a half from Angers. This may have arisen from his mention of la Baumette in the twelfth chapter of the First Book, where he speaks of it as if he had been there and had actually seen the curious arrangement of houses built into a terraced hillside, with the "stables at the very top of the houses," so that one entered them from the rear of the premises, up on the hill. He nowhere speaks of the Anjou district, however, as if he had studied there, or even had remained there any length of time. In the fifth chapter of the Second Book he says that after Pantagruel had left the University of Poitiers and was making the unattached student's customary round of the other French universities, to see what they might have to offer in the way of supplementary instruction, he went from Avignon to Valence, with his tutor, and then "in three strides and a leap came to Angers, where he found himself very well, and would have continued there some space, but that the plague drove them away." Many outbreaks of plague there were indeed in that district in the sixteenth century, and it

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is of course possible—barely possible—that a reminiscence of something of the kind in his boyhood was in Rabelais's mind when he recounted this experience of Pantagruel.

Towards the end of the year 1520, he entered the convent of Puy-St.-Martin, at Fontenay-le-Comte in the district of Poitou, which seems a strange choice for a studious person to make, because this monastery belonged to the Franciscan monks, a mendicant order which did not keep schools or do anything with teaching. At this time the Roman Catholic Church embraced the whole of Western and Central Europe, and its clergy were divided into two groups, one known as the "regular" clergy, who lived more or less apart from the world in institutions of their own, free of taxes, and free of control or supervision by the State, and practically also free of control by any church authority outside their own walls. These monastic institutions were rich; they owned one-fifth of the land of France, at this period. The other group was known as the "secular" clergy; and this was made up of a hierarchy including the pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, parish priests and deacons. The "regular" clergy, or monks, were divided into a great many orders, often known by the names of their founders, often by names derived from some internal or external characteristic. Rabelais runs over the roster of some of them in the eighteenth chapter of the Fourth Book, when Pantagruel's ship

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sighted "nine sail that came spooning before the wind; they were full of dominicans, jesuits, capuchins, hermits, austins, bernardins, celestins, theatins, egnatins, amadeans, cordeliers, carmelites, minims, and the devil and all of other holy monks and friars, who were going to the council of Chesil, to sift and garble some articles of faith against the new heretics." Some of the monastic orders kept their members moving from place to place, preaching more or less informally as opportunity offered, and depending for their livelihood upon what people would give them. Monks of the Franciscan order were strictly of this kind; they were supposed not to touch money. Erasmus says, more in jest than in earnest, though no doubt the order had its weak brethren, that they got around this injunction by wearing gloves. To remind themselves of the Lord's command to carry no money in their belts, they went without belts, substituting a piece of rope or cord, which practice got them popularly known as cordeliers. In carrying out their vow of poverty, they became very filthy and slovenly; notably so, even in a time when the general standard of cleanliness was low enough, and thus they did their share to strengthen the traditional relation between saintliness and squalor. There was some scholarship among the Franciscans, but it was the accomplishment of the few who loved learning for its own sake. The majority were very ignorant; indeed, their ignorance was somewhat of a byword, and it was

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moreover chartered, in a sense, since an article of one of their statutes recommended those who were illiterate not to go to the trouble of learning their letters. The work of the order put no premium upon education and really required none; one could do it well enough without an education, save a very little, perhaps, of a special and routine sort; and anything like literacy was quite unnecessary. Hence these monks were in the main ignorant, reactionary, and intolerant.

Yet it was this order that Rabelais joined, no one can say why; nor can any one say why he went to Fontenay-le-Comte to enter it, since there were three or four Franciscan institutions nearer and handier, and just as good for his purposes, as far as one can see, especially since none of them would seem at all attractive to one who had either his temperament or his intellectual curiosity. His having taken this strange step is the one fact which gives some faint, almost imperceptible, tinge of probability to the legend of his having been at la Baumette, for that too was a Franciscan establishment. Rabelais's relations with people appear always to have been distinctly personal; he had a great gift for friendship, a fine talent for making himself loved. So the chain of hypothesis is that he may have been at la Baumette; if so, he probably made friends there, as he did everywhere, and among them may have been one or two of his future patrons and protectors who are known to have been there; and these

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may have made representations to him in regard to a possible career. But all this is a most tenuous speculation, not worth entertaining. However unlikely a thing it was for him to do, the fact remains that Francis Rabelais fixed his relations with the church by becoming one of the "regular" clergy, a member of the monastic order founded by St. Francis of Assisi, and that he was advanced to the priesthood at Fontenay-le-Comte during his connexion with the monastery there.

II

That he should have taken holy orders is not strange; the only thing about it that appears strange is his having taken them under these particular auspices, and no doubt his reasons for doing this would appear sound enough if only we knew what they were. The Church at this time afforded a real career, broad enough to satisfy almost any ambition. It was a vast organization and immensely powerful; every European was by birth a member of it and subject to its taxing-power. It claimed a superiority over the State, and employed the State to enforce obedience on its members. If it wished to decapitate some recreant person, or burn him alive, it turned him over to the "secular arm"—that is, to the State—to carry out the sentence. Its head, the Bishop of Rome, exercised the right of review over the laws of every State, and also

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claimed authority to depose any temporal ruler anywhere in Europe. He maintained a court at Rome, with a highly organized diplomatic establishment which kept ambassadors at all the European royal courts; and these ambassadors were a real temporal authority in the various countries, and were so recognized. Thus the Church could offer a great career in politics and diplomacy; if one cared for that life, one might go far and rise high, with luck. Many did so, from the most obscure beginnings; not always through merit alone, by any means, but mostly through the same combination of qualities that goes to make success in politics generally, when tempered with about the usual proportion of good luck. The Church also held out the best chance to do anything significant in the world of letters. It did not exactly have a monopoly of education, but it gave a man the best available fulcrum, or purchase, whereby he might pry open his way both to an education and to the honours and emoluments of one. Most interesting prospect of all, entrance into the Church by the side of the "regular" clergy, settled the troublesome matter of economic security. One need not worry about food and shelter while laying pipe for one's ambitions in scholarship or politics, or advancement in the hierarchy.

Another advantage that the Church offered to an inquiring mind was that of travel, which at just this period, say the first quarter of the sixteenth century,

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meant more than it ever has meant before or since. To apprehend this, one need but imagine the quickening effect upon the minds and imaginations of men, produced by such a sudden and startling multiplication of human interests as took place at this time. This was an era of unexampled expansion; there has never been anything like it. When Rabelais was born, Columbus had just returned from his second voyage. When John Cabot landed on the coast of Canada, Rabelais was two years old; he was five when Amerigo Vespucci returned from Brazil. He was eighteen when Balboa made the discouraging discovery that yet another ocean lay to the westward of "the new world"; and he was not yet twenty-seven when one of Magellan's ships came into port with the news that it had sailed around the globe. Men saw bursting upon them the instant prospect of new trade-routes, new sources of apparently endless wealth to be exploited, a complete revolution in commerce; avarice was on its way to become a general mania in a few years. It was not, perhaps, a good time to be alive; the sum of happiness prevailing in an era of expansion is not so great as at other periods, as we of the present era are aware. But it was an interesting, a stirring time; and for one who had a lively curiosity about what was going forward, one who sought the stimulus of contact with other busy minds, the Church offered the best opportunity. One was not tied to one place to make a living; one might move

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about, sure of one's livelihood. If one got into favour with important men, one might attach oneself to them, travel with them, and get the benefit of their cultural associations. Besides, in taking stock of what the world had to offer, one could see that the monastic life was itself relatively not onerous, nor was it devoid of advantages and attractions. There was a great measure of freedom in it. One fulfilled certain routine obligations which were not too exacting, and after they were done with, one could follow one's own pursuits unhindered and unsupervised. This was better than a wizened and stagnant existence in a French rural community of people whom years of isolation had made impregnably conservative and inaccessible to all ideas not included in their inherited stock; or even than the life, almost equally inanimate, of a French provincial small town. Many a young man looked at the monastic life with desirous eyes, and would have counted himself lucky to get into it; but this was not easy. The monks were well aware that they had a desirable thing, and they were correspondingly careful to make it a favour to those who wished to share it.

If Rabelais himself had ever any illusions about the part played by spirituality in recruiting the ranks of the clergy, both secular and regular, they did not last long. " 'Since you have told us,' " said Pantagruel, on his visit to the Ringing Island, at the outset of the Fifth Book, " 'how the popehawk is begot by the

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cardinhawks, the cardinhawks by the bishhawks, and the bishhawks by the priesthawks, and the priesthawks by the clerghawks, I would gladly know whence you have these same clerghawks.' 'They are all passengers, or travelling birds,' returned Ædituus, 'and come hither from t'other world; part out of a vast country called Want-o'-bread, the rest out of another towards the West, which they style Too-many-of-'em.' " Ædituus speaks with an interesting frankness about these latter, who were somewhat in Rabelais's own situation, where " 'there are too many children, whether male or female, in some good family of the latter country; insomuch that the house would come to nothing, if the paternal state were shared among them all (as reason requires, nature directs, and God commands). For this cause, parents used to rid themselves of that inconveniency by packing off the younger fry, and forcing them to seek their fortune in this isle.' " It is possible that Rabelais himself was shouldered off in this fashion upon the abbey of Seuilly by his parents, though nothing that he says here may be taken as evidence of it. Ædituus goes on to tell Pantagruel that the majority of the birds on the Ringing Island, however, came out of the barren country called Want-o'-bread " 'when they are in danger of passing their time scurvily for want of belly-timber, being unable, or what's more likely, unwilling, to take heart of grace, and follow some honest lawful calling, or too proud-

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hearted and lazy to go to service in some sober family.'"

Thus Rabelais's entrance into a monastic life, when considered in relation to his own actual circumstances, was by no means as surprising as it appears when looked at in the light of a later day. He had a narrow choice; he was a younger son; and although the principle of primogeniture was not strictly observed in apportioning inheritances, he could hardly expect to get enough by way of patrimony to make up for the loss of other possibilities that interested him more. His brother Jamet, also a younger son, was bound out by his father in 1518 as an apprentice for two years to Geoffroy Gaudette, "bourgeois and merchant of Tours"; he married Marie Gaudette in due course, and in due course may have inherited the business—things often went that way, and still do. There were, no doubt, very substantial satisfactions in such a life as that. A boy starting out in 1518 might have done a deal worse by himself than become apprenticed to some reputable branch of commerce, marry his employer's daughter, and settle down for the rest of his days as a solid bourgeois and merchant of Tours. Francis Rabelais might have taken his brother's unambitious course, and come out as creditably as his brother seems to have done. But some such career as this was about the best that one in his circumstances could hope for, and it was not just the kind of thing that went well with Francis

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Rabelais's temperament. While there is no evidence that he ever had the unpurposeful, restless, roaming disposition of the mere vagabond, it is clear that he was always pressing hard against the boundaries of his experience, eager to reach what lay beyond them, to ransack it, turn it inside out, store away whatever of value was in it, and then press on again to what lay further. He was thus completely in the spirit of his time, which was, we repeat, preëminently a spirit of adventure, discovery, annexation, and ruthless exploitation. Nor was this true only with reference to the physical world. Men were acutely conscious that there was a great and rich realm of the spirit to be adventured for, appropriated, and exploited; as truly and almost as suddenly conscious of it as they were that unending stretches of lootable territory lay across the ocean, waiting to be pre-empted and colonized, and alien populations to be dispossessed.

III

A great effort of the imagination is needed to realize how sudden and sweeping this wave of consciousness was; and perhaps such an effort can be best aided by a reference to chronology. When Rabelais was born, printing and paper-making had been in force for fifty years, but their evolution had been slow; they had but lately got on their feet as commercial undertakings.

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When they did so, however, the production of books started up at great speed in all the countries of Western Europe almost simultaneously. Any one who is fifty years old can make a comparison, though a very weak and imperfect one, with the development of the means of transportation and communication in his own lifetime. As a boy, Rabelais saw probably very few books, but by the time he was thirty, they were relatively quite abundant; and naturally, the dissemination of books immensely facilitated and promoted the study of Greek and Roman literature, which had long been in fashion. All this literature, however, had previously been available only in manuscripts, mostly the treasure of kings, popes, and monasteries. Instruction in it was given from these manuscripts orally, supplemented by the pupils' handwriting. We have a survival of that practice in the name "lecture-system," which is still commonly given to this method of teaching. But by the first quarter of the sixteenth century, books became a property of the bourgeois, as well as of the nobility and of the monasteries, and even students of the poorer sort might hope to possess a book or two of their own.

The revival of Greek and Latin studies, which was the main expression of the spiritual life of the sixteenth century, goes by the appropriate though recently coined name of "humanism." These literatures gave the longest, most complete, and most nearly con-

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tinuous record available of everything that the human mind had ever been busy about, in all departments of its activity. They exhibited "the best that had been thought and said in the world," and it was for this reason that they were laid hold of with such eager curiosity by the aspiring genius of the period. One could not come into contact with Greek and Roman letters without touching philosophy, history, poetry, sculpture, drama, painting, architecture, agriculture, physics, mathematics, religion, medicine, law, and astronomy. Hence there was no activity of the human spirit, except music, that they did not directly and powerfully stimulate. A great renewal of interest in the study of Greek and Latin literature began in Italy, in the fourteenth century; by the sixteenth century it had covered Europe. It reached France rather late. Two teachers, one of them a man of considerable eminence, gave lessons in Greek more or less irregularly in Paris, towards the end of the fifteenth century; and in the first decade of the sixteenth century, the University of Paris offered some kind of instruction in Greek, but this lasted only about four years. At this time, too, there was but one printer in Paris who could set Greek type—indeed, the first printing-press in Paris, a small affair, was set up as late as 1470—and by 1520 he had managed to publish only five or six Greek books; with these inconsiderable exceptions, the

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Greek books used in France were imported, most of them coming from Italy.

So Rabelais's youth and maturity were roughly contemporaneous with the youth and maturity of the great art of printing. To relate him further to the status of art, science, and letters, and show what his setting was in the general movement known as humanism, we may mention that when Rabelais was born, Leonardo da Vinci had still twenty-five years to live, and Michelangelo was already twenty years old, Raphael was a boy of twelve, Titian a youth of eighteen, and Albrecht Dürer of Nüremberg, at the age of twenty-four, was beginning his mighty career as an engraver. Luca della Robbia and Donatello had been dead but a few years. Erasmus of Rotterdam, the dominating force in humanism, whose spiritual kinship with Rabelais was extremely close, closer probably than that with any other man before or since his day, was nearly thirty. Budé, who was the chief promoter of Greek studies in France, had himself begun the study of Greek the year before, at the age of twenty-six. Copernicus, the forerunner of modern astronomy, was twenty-two. Machiavelli, the founder of modern political science, was twenty-six. In the year that Cervantes was born, Rabelais was shaping up the Fourth Book of his great narrative, and getting it ready to send to the printer. Rabelais's death in 1553 preceded by nine years the birth of Lope de Vega, who, one may say, established the art of the

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modern drama in Europe, for it spread from Spain over all Europe with great rapidity; and by but eleven years, the birth of Shakespeare.

Another new and powerful influence pervaded his time, due to the political consolidation of small aggregations of people into large units, and the consequent centralizing tendency in government. Merchant's law had already long displaced feudal law in many parts of Europe, and had become city law; and now the autonomous cities, and city law, were about to be superseded by one or another form of nationalist structure, when people of approximately the same language and social customs drew together, in city and country, or were herded together, into political unity. When Rabelais was born, four nations—England, France, Portugal and Spain—had already formed themselves on this entirely new principle; and the same principle was working busily among other populations which had observed its advantages and felt its practical effectiveness.

Hence, a person born in this period was played upon by many immensely powerful currents of thought; he could hardly escape them. They were set up by the change and expansion in geography; by the re-direction and multiplication of trade-routes; by colonization; by a sudden revolution in commerce consequent upon all these; by the rise of nationalism, due chiefly to changes in the practice of commerce; by a quick

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increase in communications and associations with people of other tongues and other ways of life; and finally, by a quickening of interest in the arts and sciences, and an immense improvement in the means both of gratifying and popularizing that interest. A mind capable of going with these currents of thought had but to put itself where it would be most fully exposed to them; and the best road to that strategic position lay through the Church.

IV

Francis Rabelais, entering the monastery of Fontenay-le-Comte in the late months of 1520, had, as we have said, made considerable headway with his education before he came. He was able to write very good Latin, the literary language of the time, and seems to have learned a little Greek, enough to set him in a great heat of eagerness to learn more. Obscure as may be the tradition about la Baumette and its suggestive proximity to the University of Angers, it is at least one way—and there is no other that can be any better vouched for—of accounting for the higher educational facilities that he must have found somewhere, and also for the origin, otherwise quite unaccounted-for, of the most important friendships that he ever formed; for Geoffroy d'Estissac and the brothers du Bellay were there. One may go so far as to

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presume that the prospect of such influential friendships would in itself have been enough to draw Rabelais to la Baumette, and even to presume that joining the Franciscan order would have seemed a cheap price to pay for it; yet it must be remembered that for any support derived from actual evidence, the presumption is gratuitous.

But however he came by his equipment, Rabelais appeared at Fontenay-le-Comte with a first-rate practical knowledge of Latin, and some Greek. He immediately struck up a great friendship and companionship, through community of intellectual interests, with a young monk there named Pierre Amy, who had held some correspondence with the great Budé, the steadfast counsellor and helper of all youths desirous of humanist learning. In the Franciscan desert of ignorance, Amy took to Rabelais as to a kindred spirit more or less heaven-sent, and having managed to get hold of some Greek books from one source or another, they studied together. As for Amy, he had found the uphill road to scholarship rather stiff going, when one was plodding it alone, and he had evidently unbosomed himself of loneliness to Budé; for in the spring of 1520, Budé wrote him a sympathetic and encouraging letter, mentioning Amy's hard fate in being the only one in the monastery who cared for Greek and Latin studies. When Rabelais appeared and made his ambitions known to Amy, the first thing Amy suggested was

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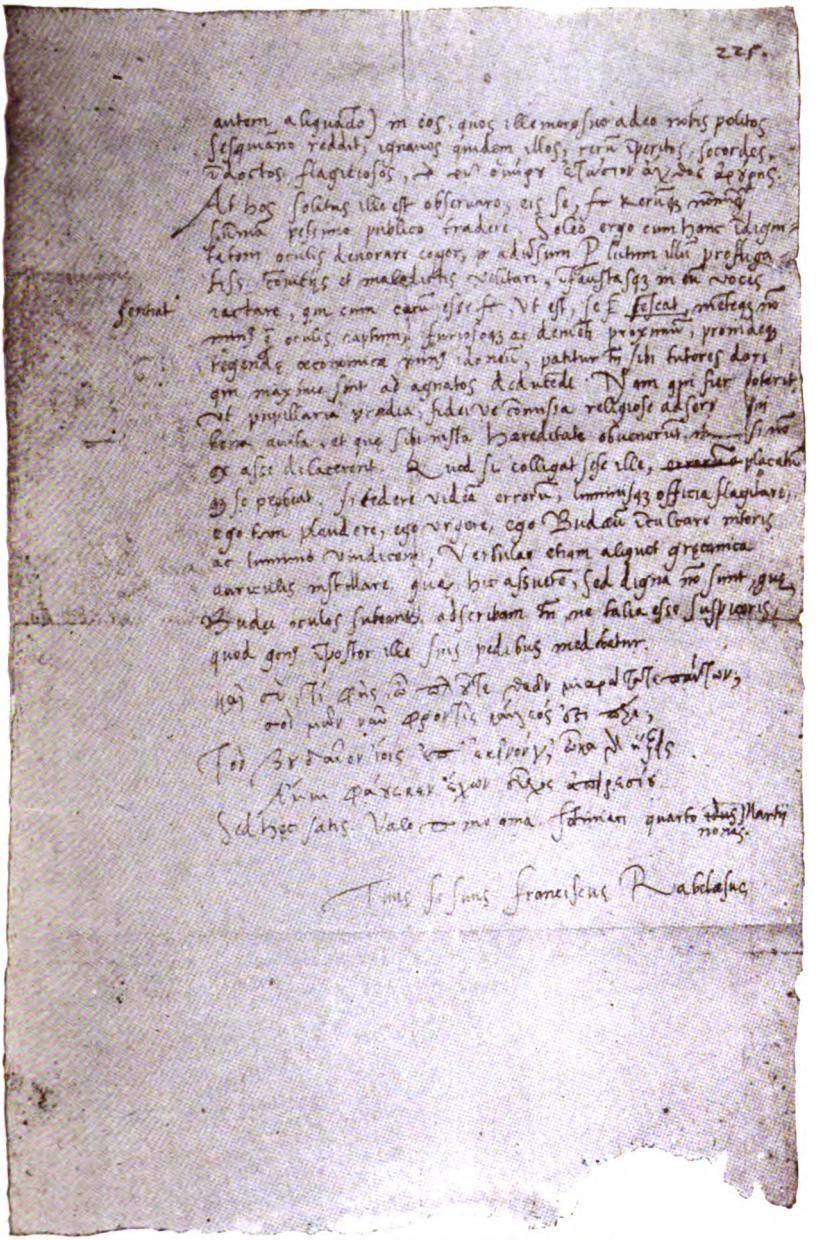

Last page of Rabelais's first letter to Budé

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that he too should write to Budé, which Rabelais accordingly did, in excellent Latin, winding up his letter with a commendable rhetorical flourish of Greek. Budé acknowledged this effusion in a letter to Amy, but did not reply directly. About five months later Rabelais wrote again, speaking with some modesty of his first letter, saying that he had written it at the instigation of Amy, who had assured him it would be well received; and this letter, which has been preserved in Budé's correspondence, is the first actual evidence of Rabelais's being at Fontenay-le-Comte, and is indeed the first authentic document concerning him.

To this letter Budé replied directly, saying that in the confusion of the life at court, he envied Amy and Rabelais their leisure, youth, and freedom to pursue as they chose their studies in philology. Budé was then secretary to the king, Francis I; it was a hard, exacting place, made harder by the king's levity, inconsistency, and unreliability. He had taken the place only for the leverage it gave on his projects for organizing and institutionalizing humane studies in France; and with the duties and difficulties of his place, and with attention to the hundred-and-one humanistic irons that he had always in the fire, he had but little leisure for the laborious job of writing letters of encouragement to students. Nevertheless he managed to correspond with Rabelais at intervals of several years, giving him every assurance of respect and regard

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for his attainments. In the first letter that he wrote him, indeed, he praises his Greek and Latin style, about which Rabelais had modestly expressed some diffidence. Using what would be for classical Latin a very strong term, he assures Rabelais that his letter is *utriusque linguæ peritiam singularem redolens.* When one considers the difficulties in the way of Greek at this time, the great scarcity of books even in Paris, the greater scarcity of teachers, amounting, one might say, to there being none at all, one would give a great deal to know how Rabelais got the proficiency that his letter shows. The praise of one who was second in reputation only to Erasmus, was not exaggerated; and by what means Rabelais managed to merit it, is perhaps the most interesting of the many unanswerable questions to which the known facts of his life give rise.

Rabelais had four years of what seems to have been on the whole a very agreeable and interesting life in this monastery. The discipline could not have been at all severe. Evidently Amy and Rabelais pretty well regulated their own pursuits, the monks no doubt understanding practically nothing of them, and caring less. It would appear too that the monastic discipline left its subjects great freedom to go and come as they pleased. A letter from Amy in 1522, in which, by the way, he sends affectionate messages to Rabelais, "the most learned of the Franciscans"—faint praise, but not so meant—shows by the date that he had gone

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as far afield as Saintes, and that he was visiting a friend there. Moreover it would appear that nothing interfered with the two young Franciscan friars' free run of the town of Fontenay, or with their liberty of association with a rather remarkable and interesting group of men who had their headquarters there.

V

The old feudal town of Fontenay had taken on a new lease of life about twenty years before Rabelais was born, in the period when the French monarchy under Louis XI consolidated French territories and centralized French government—when the geographical and political France that we know today came into full being. Previous to this, Fontenay had been one of the towns that were bandied about from one owner to another; at one time the English held it, at another it belonged to the Duke of Brittany, at another to the royal domain, and so on. Louis XI made a commercial town of it, and it forthwith became rich and flourishing. The king further distinguished it by making it the seat of an appellate court, which brought together there a considerable personnel of officers, barristers, solicitors, and clerks. Several of these had been touched by the contagion of humanism. They had a common interest in relating their profession to the humanist movement, after the example of Budé,

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himself a lawyer, who had early set about clearing and annotating the text of Roman law, which formed the basis of existing legal theory and practice, purifying it of absurd glosses, and straightening out the ignorance of earlier commentators. Budé had published his work in 1508, twelve years before we get sight of this group of jurisconsults assembled at Fontenay. His labours had not only set a standard of achievement; they had established both a point of view and a method of approach, and these were a matter of great interest to the more advanced thought of the profession. Aside from a professional concern with humanism, moreover, the group at Fontenay were much taken with the general aspects of the newer learning. One of Amy's letters speaks of their habitual meetings, usually in the terraced gardens of a house belonging to one of them, in the shade of wild laurels, and their discussion of law, morals, philosophy, and poetry—the learning proper to cultivated men of the world, as he says, who are interested in all the humanities.

Into this circle Rabelais promptly made his way, and Amy with him. There is some ground for thinking that one of the number, the district-attorney Mollet, came from Chinon, and may have introduced Rabelais to their host as the son of an old neighbour, and that Rabelais may have brought in Amy; but this is guesswork, and of no great importance either way. However the thing was brought about, the two Fran-

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ciscan friars got into the good graces of these humanist men of law, haunted their society, made firm friends among them, and established relations that survived several rather serious ups and downs, and lasted some time after the normal changes of fortune had dissolved the group.

VI

The principal figures in this group were a civil officer named Artus Cailler, and his son-in-law, a magistrate named André Tiraqueau; the meetings of the circle usually took place at Tiraqueau's house, or in his pleasant belaurelled garden. These meetings, at the time when we come in sight of them, were in good part given over to an intellectual exercise that seems rather odd for men of that quality to be engaged in when there were so many more profitable things to do, but one that has nevertheless sometimes occupied much abler men both before and since. They discussed women and marriage, and tried to settle the whole question of feminism in the immediate practical aspects which it presented in that day. The subject was one of long-standing interest to Tiraqueau, in particular; he had already distinguished himself in it at an early age. What set his mind going in that direction in the first instance is unfortunately not clear. When he was twenty-four years old, he married Marie, the

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eleven-year-old daughter of the *lieutenant-particulier* Artus Cailler, it being then no uncommon thing to marry off one's daughters when they were just out of infancy, if one could find good husbands for them. While contemplating this step, he gravely considered his responsibility for inducting this eleven-year-old child into the way she should go, and fortified himself by translating a Latin treatise on the duties of wifehood, written by the Italian Barbaro, which contained the precepts and recommendations that he wished to bring to his young bride's attention. He published this in 1513, the year of his marriage, seven years before Rabelais and Amy entered the circle at Fontenay. In the same year also he delivered himself of an original book on the same general subject, with a rather larger scope; it was the first section of an ambitious and comprehensive work which he had projected, dealing with the laws and customs of the Poitou. He dedicated this first section, called *De Legibus Connubialibus*, to his father-in-law, and reprinted it with some modifications, in 1515. Now, nine years later, he was deeply engaged upon a new and very much improved and enlarged edition, which he published in 1524.

It seems, then, that Tiraqueau's mind had been moderately preoccupied with this subject for some time. One cannot say that his preoccupation was unwholesome. In its genesis it seems understandable and

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blameless enough, with nothing more against it than that it was due to a rather unhumorous exaggeration of the *ignotum pro magnifico;* yet even this is not beyond what one might expect from the severe and somewhat narrow literalness of a promising young bourgeois lawyer who would tend always to the reduc-

Tiraqueau lecturing on law
(Frontispiece to one of his works, published 1551)

tion of all human relations within a professional purview. Tiraqueau's book, however, kept him more or less in hot water, as writers on heavily controversial subjects usually are kept in hot water by their writings; especially writers of his type, who show little of the imagination, the lucidity of view, and largeness of temper that are bred only by wide experience of human

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affairs. His book, naturally enough, was quite popular, for all the solid bourgeois of his period would find in it their own extremely conservative view of the nature and status of women faithfully reflected; and they would not, moreover, any more miss the saving grace of insight and humour in Tiraqueau's book than they would miss it in themselves. On the other hand, those who dissented from views like Tiraqueau's did so on grounds no less personal. The most successful literature on this topic, then as now, was either that which by its violence and raciness cultivated a success of scandal, or that which was thoroughly reactionary, unimaginative, and profoundly dogmatic, like Tiraqueau's.

Then, as now, furthermore, the subject itself was popular. Feminism had a literature long before printing was thought of; and it had more than its share of books devoted to it after the new art had got into full swing. M. Abel Lefranc has drawn up a truly formidable list of the titles which appear in this mass of literature, and a list of the notable names which lent themselves to one side or the other of this controversy. One looks at them in astonishment. In justice to Tiraqueau's apparent uxoriousness, it must be perceived that the feminist question, lively even in the Middle Ages, had gained particularly strong headway in the last half of the fifteenth century, and that when Tiraqueau wrote, works on the subject were becoming more

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and more abundant. The immediate occasion of this increase of interest seems to have been the publication of Martin le Franc's *Champion des Dames*, composed about 1440, a sort of encyclopædia of the ideas prevailing about women in the Middle Ages. Many of these polemics were done in verse, at great length. The *Chevalier aux Dames* runs to some five thousand lines. Another of seven thousand, on the negative side of the question, has the interesting title of *La Faulseté, Trahyson et les Tours de ceulx qui suivent le Train d'Amours*. There are also many fanciful titles, such as *Le Miroir des Dames; Le Jardin de Plaisance et Fleurs de Rhétoriques; Le Loyer des Folles Amours*, a witty piece developed on the idea of "no money, no love." So high did the controversy run that some few writers undertook to act the thankless part of mediators, conciliating both sides; such was Robert du Herlin, who in 1493 dedicated *L'Acort des Mesdisans et Biendisans* to Anne of Brittany, and also Jean Marot, father of Clément Marot, who brought forth *Le Vray-Disant Advocate des Dames*. Even the mighty Erasmus took some cognizance of the contention by publishing his *Institution of Christian Marriage*.

The humour of all this lies largely in the fact that the women themselves seem quite contentedly to have left these logomachies to the men. They had an early representative or two in the field, but appear mostly to have chosen the rôle of bystanders, perhaps taking

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the rather practical view that their own estimate of themselves was likely to be nearer the truth than any man's estimate of them. The course of the controversy, moreover, seems to show on the part of the men an uneasy sense that the women were pretty clear about their own estimate of themselves. While men were arguing about their limitations, on the flat assumption that women were a feeble and dependent sex, they quietly put forward some specimens of womanhood who showed themselves anything but feeble and dependent—Marguerite of Navarre, sister of Francis I, famous for her learning and her literary powers, Jeanne of Aragon, Anne of Brittany, Louise of Savoy, Renée of France, Diana of Poitiers, and presently Catherine de Médicis and Jeanne d'Albret. These living arguments could not be gainsaid or got over —there the obstinate things were, most inconveniently requiring to be accounted for. The ground of the discussion obviously had to be shifted. Hitherto the ground had been purely personal, never political or even, strictly speaking, social in character—social, that is, as dealing with women as human beings and bringing in any question of human rights. All this controversial literature was based on nothing more substantial than personal opinion, often upon personal spites, grievances, or the opposite. On its lighter side, it was all more or less heavily tinctured with malicious satire, and on its more serious side, with the flavour of law,

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or of theology, or both. Now that women, especially women of high rank who were able to set the tone of social life, were coming forward, laying hold of the new learning and the new views of life which it disseminated, and not only laying hold of them but distinguishing themselves in them, and ornamenting society in a most conspicuous way by the exercise of their intellectual powers, the old method of approach very soon began to appear antiquated. A few clung to the personal point of view, like Gratian Dupont, a highly-placed civil officer of Toulouse, who was convinced of the great danger threatened by an effeminization of society, and who published in 1534, quite in the old vein, a series of severe invectives against women, drawn up in complicated and intricate rhyme. But in 1542 appeared a small book by Antoine Héroët, called *La Parfaicte Amye*, one of those works which, though slight in themselves, gain a great vogue, and exercise an influence quite disproportionate to their merit, by virtue of timeliness; it just hit the shift in general thought on the subject. A metaphysical and idealistic work, rather artlessly glorifying love and the ideal woman, it ran rapidly through ten editions, and set the method of approach for future dealing with the subject. In 1555 appeared the quasi-official history of the "quarrel of woman," by François Billon, who devoted to it a bulky volume called *Le Fort Inexpugnable de l'Honneur du Sexe Féminin*. It is prob-

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ably the most passionate panegyric ever composed in honour of woman; and it was appropriately dedicated to five of the outstanding and influential "new women" of the period, Catherine de Médicis, Marguerite of France, Jeanne d'Albret, Marguerite de Bourbon, and Anne of Ferrara. It dealt heavily in allegory of a martial type, as its name might suggest; and in the course of this it represents Rabelais (who had then been dead but two years) being taken as booty into the camp of Virtue, and presented to the ladies.

VII

This episode in Billon's book at once takes the reader back thirty years, to the work of the group at Fontenay, from which he may follow the course of events whereby Rabelais got his reputation as an anti-feminist. The iron-clad consistency and stringent rigour of Tiraqueau's published views on the status of women had put him by general acclaim in the front rank of the anti-feminists, and, as we have said, had kept him considerably in hot water. In his dedicatory letter to his wife's father, Artus Cailler, he protested that he had been overpersuaded by his friends into premature publication of the first part of his work on the morals and customs of the Poitou; that he had regarded its contents only as a sort of tentative programme of married life, which he was desirous of sub-

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mitting to the approval of his father-in-law; and he deprecates its acceptance as a support to the enemies of the weaker sex, as it immediately got the reputation of being. Here again, in view of the unimaginative character of the bourgeois lawyer, one may not be too skeptical towards this plea. Probably Tiraqueau's purposes were quite as he stated them, and he may have been quite unpleasantly set back by their being misconstrued. Yet, on the other hand, it is hard to see how so great a failure in imagination could take place—or it would be, if one were not so often confronted with such failures—and Tiraqueau's public is not much to be blamed for having promptly elevated him, in spite of his protestations, to high rank among the "enemies of the weaker sex."

It is one thing to rest under the misconceptions of an undiscriminating public, however, and quite another to be unjustly hauled over the coals by a friend and associate. In the group at Fontenay was a young man named Amaury Bouchard, a magistrate and civil officer, living at Saintes, a friend of Tiraqueau and closely associated with him; he was also a great friend of Rabelais's associate, the young Franciscan monk, Pierre Amy, who visited him at his home. He distinguished himself in later life by his conduct of diplomatic missions in England and Germany. In 1522 Bouchard, apparently out of a clear sky, published a book directly levelled at Tiraqueau for his reactionary

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attitude towards women. It seems to have been mostly the offspring of youth and sprightliness, and to have been composed rather for lack of something better to do. Amy was in the secret, and contributed a preface, in which he tries in advance to smooth out Tiraqueau's feathers by saying that the challenge was impersonal, and thrown down to Tiraqueau only in his representative capacity—that Bouchard's contention was after all only literary, and not otherwise intended. Amy, indeed, practically dissociated himself from the book, saying that he regarded it as a youthful work, lacking the seasoned wisdom of age; although, in respect of the main issue, Amy was no doubt on Bouchard's side.

A specimen sentence from the outset of Bouchard's book will show that its approach was rather direct and searching, to say the least. "André Tiraqueau," says Bouchard, "the man whom one may with all propriety range among the learned, in writing a book on matrimonial laws, with a view to turning youth away from social commerce with women, lets himself go in such a way against faithless women that one can hardly believe it is not the sacred body of good women that he is attacking full sail." This was going behind the returns with a vengeance, for poor Tiraqueau had plentifully, and no doubt in all good faith, disavowed any such disposition, and even a less unhumorous man than he might be reasonably excused for feeling some annoyance about it. Tiraqueau was wounded and wrath-

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ful; he and Bouchard had a spirited correspondence over the matter. Bouchard's book, indeed, was a kind of bombshell in the group at Fontenay. Probably Tiraqueau wished that the whole subject were at the bottom of the sea before ever he had touched it, but his friends in the Fontenay circle urged him to take up the challenge, and he himself seems to have thought that he owed it to himself and his position to do so. Accordingly, it appears that the whole assemblage, including Rabelais, set to work at high pressure, to help him get out a new edition of his book as soon as possible; and this was published two years later, in 1524.

They made a good thorough job of it, loading the work so heavily with citations of all the known authorities in law, literature, theology and medicine, that it reached the proportions of an impressive literary curiosity. It is really a grand dress-parade of the wisdom of the ages, of classical references strung together at an appalling length, until the book was spun out to twenty times its original size. To have got through that much work, and that kind of work, in two years, was something of an achievement. Its intense and obtuse moral earnestness is such that one can still read its precepts with great amusement. In choosing a wife, for instance, it says one should fix on a girl who is neither too pretty nor too ugly. One should avoid widows and mature, experienced girls. A man should be married by the time he is twenty-six; a woman by

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eighteen. Engaged persons should reveal all their imperfections to each other; without, however, the young lady's disrobing for that purpose. A husband must never permit his wife to consider herself his equal. He should never beat her, because she has two ways of revenge always open to her—adultery and poison—but he should bring her up by caresses mixed on occasion with severity, even with threats, if need be. But the sauce is not all for the goose; Tiraqueau made a legalist's conscientious effort to be impartial. Men who expect their wives to love them should set them a good example, by loving them and being rigorously faithful to them. Moreover, a husband should not be jealous, and if in spite of all precautions his wife should turn out refractory (*impudica*), he must remember to bear it patiently. In this there is an echo of Erasmus's saying, that the true Christian "shall have no need of divorce, as being able to mend or to bear all manner of evils."

In his preface Tiraqueau strikes out at Bouchard with many evidences of rancour and resentment, but promising to desist from any more personalities in the body of the book. He cannot quite refrain even there, however, from breaking out against Bouchard every now and then, at some length; intimating that he is a fool, that he writes to ingratiate himself with the ladies, that he is a devotee of libertine practices. In this connexion he borrows from Rabelais a Greek

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pun on his antagonist's name, which M. Barat ingeniously approximates by the French *Boucharmant* for *Bouchard*. If Bouchard showed himself immature and perhaps bumptious, Tiraqueau shows himself, as the Germans say, *grob*—a word for which, curiously, English seems to have no exact equivalent. Apparently, Tiraqueau and Bouchard never made up; possibly Tiraqueau abandoned the publisher Josse Bade after 1524, and took his many books to another shop, because Bade had published Bouchard's work. Sixty years after, when still another edition of the *De Legibus Connubialibus* was put out—there had been one in 1546—Tiraqueau's son goes over the whole ground again editorially, and sets forth afresh the disloyalty of Amaury Bouchard.

Rabelais put his learning and diligence at the service of Tiraqueau's book, in common with the rest of the group, and apparently made himself conspicuous, for he gained very handsome acknowledgments from the author. Rabelais contributed some remarkably good Greek elegiacs in praise of Tiraqueau, which were printed at the head of the 1524 edition;[1] and accom-

[1] Greek studies have largely gone out of fashion, but we venture to reproduce Rabelais's elegiacs on the chance that some one may be interested in seeing what he could do with Greek verse at this period.

Βίβλον ἐν οἴκοισιν τήνδ' ἡλυσίοισιν ἰδόντες
Ἄμμιγα μὴν ἄνδρες θηλυτέραι τ' ἔφασαν.
Οἵσι νόμοις δδ' ἔουτ' Ἀνδρέας τήνγε διδάσκει
Συζυγίην Γαλάτας, ἡδὲ γάμοιο κλέος,
Τουτ ἐδίδαξε Πλάτων ἄν γ' ἡμέας, εἰν ἀνθρώποις
Κεδνότερος τίς κ' ἄν τοῦγε Πλάτωνος ἔῃ;

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panying it was a Latin eulogy of Rabelais himself, which Amy contributed. Tiraqueau acknowledged his debt to Rabelais for a translation (unfortunately now lost) of one of the books of Herodotus, mentioning new readings of the text, and praising Rabelais for "a scholarship beyond his years," calling him "most highly accomplished" (*peritissimus*) in both the Greek and Latin tongues, and commending his proficiency in general learning. In one of his recurrent attacks on Bouchard also, Tiraqueau quotes Rabelais's sly dig at Bouchard for trying to get on the soft side of the ladies, and he says further that in the course of this pleasantry Rabelais had manufactured the Greek pun on Bouchard's name. Evidently Rabelais did not object to being thus quoted. He knew Bouchard well, and probably reckoned with his sense of humour, notwithstanding the halo of seriousness which Tiraqueau's truculence had thrown around the occasion. His friendship with Bouchard seems, in fact, to have continued unimpaired; and about ten years later, in 1532, when Rabelais published three learned works at Lyons, he dedicated one of them to Bouchard and another to Tiraqueau.

VIII

Thus it was that Rabelais came first to be popularly ranged among the anti-feminists, where we find him placed by Billon, thirty years later. When he pub-

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lished the Third Book in 1546, with its long fanciful play upon the subject of Panurge's marriage, his early connexion with Tiraqueau's book was remembered against him; for by that time he had a great literary reputation, and curiosity was as busy about his personal convictions as is usual in such cases. The best critical opinion inclines to make him out an anti-feminist, and to regard his interest in Tiraqueau's work as serious. It is possible, however, to think that his view was not quite so objective as this. Rabelais was at this time young, an eager student with a vast intellectual curiosity and a healthy pride of learning, ready to try his hand at any intellectual exercise that came along, for the sake of seeing what could be made of it. Any bone would do to sharpen his teeth upon. While therefore his work with Tiraqueau was no doubt serious enough as far as it went, it may have been serious only within the limits of a kind of game. Nor need the inference follow that he was at this time particularly impressed by the essential unsoundness of the partisan position on both sides, or by the lack of humour and imagination displayed by the propagandists on both sides. Probably he did not reflect that far upon the general aspects of the case. Such a definite assorting of the concerns of life into categories of what is, and what is not, worth while, is usually done at a later period in one's life. Rabelais may have shared the considered, literal, and dogged views of Tiraqueau; it

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is impossible to say that he did not; but on the evidence offered, one might find ground for believing that his attitude was that of an attorney. Moreover, with all deference to French critical opinion—and it must never be forgotten that Rabelais is in the first instance a French property, that the French understand him better than foreigners ever can—an alien critic cannot even be quite sure that his mature mind shows a more definitely anti-feminist bent. It does show that by the time he came to discuss Panurge's marriage he had taken a detached and humorous view of both the feminist and anti-feminist contention. It does show that for literary purposes he follows in the long and preponderant tradition of satire. That this view, however, is even implicitly unfavourable to women, or that he follows in this tradition for any other than literary purposes, is by no means clear beyond peradventure to an alien critic. We ourselves have strong suspicions on this point, which we hope to justify later.

We get a few more glimpses of Tiraqueau, enough to let us perceive the progressive ankylosis of middle-class moralistic legalism at work upon his character. He remained at Fontenay for ten years after 1524; his professional reputation, his moral earnestness, the number of his books and of his children, all increasing satisfactorily with each year that he trod the path of the upright bourgeois lawyer and magistrate. In 1541 he got his reward; the king appointed him to a posi-

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tion of great honour and dignity, as councillor to the Parlement of Paris. By this time his old friend Francis Rabelais stood before his eyes as a sad example of a good man suddenly gone wrong. Rabelais had given such boundless promise in the old days of their association twenty years before, and since then he had done so much by way of fulfilment. His scholarship was immense; the resources of his learning seemed endless. He had risen to eminence as a physician. He had published a text and commentary on treatises of Hippocrates and Galen. He had edited, published, and dedicated to him, André Tiraqueau, the letters written on medical questions by the great Italian physician, Manardi. He was the personal physician, the adviser, and trusted friend of some of the most eminent men in the public life of the period. Yet he had condescended to forsake Latin and to write books in the vulgar tongue; books that were in the popular taste for what is low and subversive. One could not quite understand them, or see exactly what they were driving at, but decidedly they would not do; one must not commit oneself. So, when Tiraqueau got out a new edition of his *De Legibus Connubialibus* in 1546, he suppressed Rabelais's Greek elegiacs, which had stood at the head of the edition of 1524. Four years later, he published a large work, dedicated to the king, Henry II, in which he had occasion to list the most eminent physicians of the time. All are there but

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Rabelais. Rabelais, whom Tiraqueau himself had first interested in the study of medicine, to whose attention he had himself brought Manardi's letters, and suggested their publication; Francis Rabelais, bachelor, licentiate, doctor, and lecturer in medicine of the University of Montpellier, demonstrator of anatomy, known and praised as one of the best anatomists living, who had been head of the great hospital at Lyons, city physician of Metz, and private physician of Cardinal du Bellay—Rabelais's name is not mentioned! Three years after this, in 1552, Tiraqueau, in his official capacity, consented to an injunction issued by the Parlement of Paris against the exposure or sale of the Fourth Book of his old friend's *Pantagruel*, at the instance of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris!

IX

Thus we see that before Rabelais was thirty years old, he had accumulated a large experience of rural life in the Touraine and in the Poitou; he knew also the life of the small-town bourgeois, as it was exemplified in Chinon; he knew also the monastic life; he knew also the type of bourgeois academic mind displayed by the "men of the robe," by Tiraqueau and his associates at Fontenay. He knew all these phases of life, moreover, in the only way that any phase of life can be

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really known, not from the outside as an observer, but from the inside as a participant. His knowledge of peasant life was the kind of knowledge that comes only to those who, like Gargantua, were brought up "like the other little children of the country." He had been one of those present when on some summer holiday in the lovely valley of the Loire, "after dinner they all went tag-rag together to the willow-grove, where on the green grass to the sound of merry flutes and pleasant bag-pipes, they danced so gallantly that it was a sweet and heavenly sport to see them so frolic." He knew the peasant dialect, the peasant glossary, because he spoke them as a child; he knew the habit and convention of peasant society, because he had shared them from birth. He had rubbed elbows with Dingdong in the village market, and helped him tend his sheep; no literary art in the world will enable a man to talk the trade-talk of the chaffering French peasant sheep-dealer correctly, unless he has learned it in his youth with crook and shears:

> 'Well, this bargain shall be made between you and me, friend and neighbour; we will get a pair of scales, then you shall be put into one of them, and my ram into the other. Now I'll hold you a peck of Busch oysters that in weight, value and price, he shall outdo you, and you shall be found light in the very numerical manner as when you shall be hanged and suspended.'
>
> 'Patience,' said Panurge; 'but you would do much for me and your whole posterity if you would chaffer

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with me for him, or some other of his inferiors. I beg it of you; good your worship, be so kind.'

'Hark ye, friend of mine,' answered the other, 'with the fleece of these, your fine Roan cloth is to be made; your Lemster superfine wool is mine arse to it; mere flock in comparison. Of their skins the best cardivant will be made, which shall be sold for Turkey and mon-

Panurge bargaining with Dingdong
Book IV, Ch. 6.

telimart, or for Spanish leather, at least. Of the guts shall be made fiddle and harp strings, that will sell as dear as if they came from Munican or Aguileia. What do you think on't, hah?'

'If you please, sell me one of them,' said Panurge, 'and I will be yours for ever. Look, here is ready cash. What's the price?' . . .

'Neighbour, my friend,' answered Dingdong, 'they are meat for none but kings and princes: their flesh is so delicate, so savoury and so dainty, that one would

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> swear it melted in the mouth. I bring them out of a country where the very hogs, God be with us, live on nothing but myrobalans. The sows in their styes, when they lie-in (saving the honour of this good company) are fed only with orange-flowers.'
>
> 'But,' said Panurge, 'drive me a bargain for one of them.' . . .
>
> 'Not so fast, Robin,' answered the trader. . . . 'Now I think on't, over all the fields where they piss, corn grows as fast as if the Lord had pissed there; they need neither be tilled nor dunged. Besides, man, your chymists extract the best saltpetre in the world out of their urine. Nay, with their very dung (with reverence be it spoken) the doctors in our country make pills that cure seventy-eight kinds of diseases, the least of which is the evil of St. Eutropius of Xaintes, from which good Lord deliver us!'

No one, we repeat, can learn to handle the selling-talk of the drover's trade in this fashion, unless he has put in some kind of practical apprenticeship, early in life, in the fields and markets. No one, again, can acquire a steady running command of peasant's proverbs, aphorisms, and by-words unless, like Rabelais and Cervantes, he has been brought up on them. The master-works of Rabelais and Cervantes contain more of these gems of peasant wit and wisdom than can be found in any other writer that we know of. The eleventh chapter of the First Book is almost made up of them; they are simply shovelled in. Gargantua would "say the ape's paternoster," "drive the cart before the oxen," "turn the sows out to hay," "piss against

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the wind," "hide in the water for fear of rain," "shoe the grasshoppers," and "beat the dogs before the lion." He knew how to "discern flies in milk," and to "make soup of such bread as he had," and he was always ready to "catch larks when the sky should fall," and so on.

With an equal particularity and intimacy did Rabelais, before he reached the age of thirty, know the life, both personal and institutional, of the "regular" clergy; a knowledge that was later to inform his account of the abbey of Thélème, and his portrayal of one of the greatest characters ever sketched in fiction, Friar John of the Funnels. He knew theology, he knew Greek and Roman literature. By association with an eminent group of practicing lawyers, he got a good footing in both civil law and canon law; he shows the scope of his acquaintance with them in his account of Bridlegoose, and in his chapters on the worship of the decretals by the dwellers on the island of Papimany. He was, moreover, on his way to the knowledge of medicine, in which he later reached high distinction. It must be remembered that at this stage of the development of science, it was still quite possible for a single mind to "take all learning for its province," as Francis Bacon, in the generation next after Rabelais, described his own enterprise. One could still gain a professional quality *in omni re scibili*, like Abelard in the Middle Ages, "the man unto whom it

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was granted to know everything." This aim at universal knowledge, indeed, was characteristic of humanism, and for a very definite and good reason. The humanists were not after culture for its own sake, as a possession, an ornament, or even as a guide for the individual life. They had the sincerely practical idea of clearing the theory, and straightening out the practice, of the arts and sciences in such respects as they had become coarsened and deformed, in theory or in practice, or in both, by tradition. Their devotion to Greek and Roman sources was by no means a purblind and superstitious reverence for mere antiquity; they would cheerfully have accepted the strong commonsense observation of Thomas Hobbes, that mere antiquity was in itself nothing respectable, but if it were, their own age was the oldest. What they were after was the longest possible perspective on human society, and especially on tradition and the effect of tradition in directing the actual current course of practice in all departments of spiritual and social activity; and this perspective was best furnished by the literature of Greece and Rome.

When Rabelais left the circle at Fontenay, we repeat, he knew the peasant, the monk, the small-town bourgeois, and the "man of the robe." He knew the views of life and the demands on life that were characteristic of these four elements in society—knew them with a knowledge so ready, intimate, and particular,

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that he could put his hand on any item of it whenever he wanted it, all the way from local dietary to religious and artistic aspiration. He understood the mind of Homenas, of Bridlegoose, of Tom Wellhung, who lost his hatchet, as well as he knew the dozen or more local Poitevin peasant names applied to certain fish and birds common to the region. Now, after several formative years in his pleasant associations at Fontenay, he was to move on into an entirely different stratum of society, quite unlike anything that he had hitherto experienced.

X

Circumstances brought about the shift. In 1523 the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, commonly known as the Sorbonne, began to take unfavourable notice of the humanist movement. The revolt of Protestantism against the Church had been going on here and there in Europe for three years. In its character of a religious body, the Church would have had no great need to worry about it; but the revolt was hardly more than nominally against the religious side of the Church. It was directed actually by an economic and nationalist motive. The Church's political character, its pretension to universal sovereignty, was directly in the way of the movement towards nationalist centralization that was now in full swing all over Europe; and its wealth was so enormous that the

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"He takes on his back the two precious hatchets, and comes to Chinon, the famous city, noble city, ancient city, yea, the first city in the world."

Book IV, Prologue.

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nationalist kings and princes coveted its holdings and laid pipe to confiscate them. Great abuses in the financial administration of the Church, and exorbitant exactions in the way of taxes and forced contributions, played into the hands of these desirous potentates. Rabelais speaks of the "dreadful chapters" of the decretals "that draw every year out of France to Rome, four hundred thousand ducats, and more." Indeed, more than that went out of France, and much more than that from England. The European monarchs naturally wished to bleed their own people for their own benefit, rather than stand by and see them bled at this rate for the benefit of Rome. The people became restless and reluctant; they felt that the benefits of the Church cost more than they were worth; and this restlessness gave the guise of patriotism to the royal itch for confiscating this source of revenue. The reverberations of the Protestant revolt, like those of the movement of humanism, were late in reaching France; but reach it finally they did, and the Faculty of Theology took notice accordingly. Entrenched in power and authority, this body took the only kind of measures that such a body ever knows how to take: measures of repression, injunction, and prohibition. They directed these against the humanists, and particularly against the study of Greek. There was a certain injustice in this, and a certain justice. With organized Protestantism, the leaders of humanist thought and

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criticism did not have, and could not have, anything to do. To the clear vision of Erasmus, for instance, or of Rabelais, there was not a pin to choose between the essential philosophical unsoundness of Roman Vaticanism and that of Protestant Vaticanism. They viewed the exchange of a book's supremacy for a bishop's supremacy, as nothing that the best reason and spirit of man could find it worth while to make. So, for what they saw would be the inevitable upshot of the Protestant principle—the setting-up of innumerable little, contentious and pettifogging organizations, Calvinist, Zwinglian, Lutheran, and so on, over the whole face of Christendom, all equally unsound, and equally containing in themselves the seeds of further subdivision and of final dissolution—they could see nothing in this worth a breach with the existing organization at Rome. Erasmus's ideal of the Christian Church [1] was as remote from Calvin's as it was from

[1] "Jesus Christ came into the world to form unto himself a people that should wholly depend upon God, and placing no confidence in any earthly support and comfort, should be after another manner rich, after another manner wise, after another manner noble, after another manner potent; in one word, after another manner happy; designing to attain felicity by the contempt of those things which are generally admired.

"A people that should be strangers to filthy lusts, by studying in this flesh the life of angels; that should have no need of divorce, as being able to mend or to bear all manner of evils; that should be wholly ignorant of oaths, as those who will neither distrust nor deceive anybody; that make not the getting of money their business, as having laid up their treasure in heaven; that should not be transported with vainglory, because they refer all to the glory of Christ alone; void of ambition, as disposed, the greater they are, so much the more to submit themselves unto all men for Christ's sake;

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that of Alexander VI, or even from that of Leo X, great humanist of the purely pagan type as Leo X undoubtedly was. Being sincerely religious and Christian spirits, men like Erasmus, Budé, Rabelais, and Thomas More could not take refuge, like many of their fifteenth-century Italian exemplars of humanism, in a polite skeptical aloofness from the fate of organized Christianity. So they clung to the existing organization; they remained Catholic, perceiving that a reformation of the organization was at least practicable, if difficult, hoping for it, and doing what they could to bring it about. Rabelais even never renounced the ministry; he lived and died in the priesthood of the Church of Rome.

So the proscription of humanism by the Sorbonne was in a sense unjust to the humanists, yet it was also in a sense appropriate—appropriate, though, of course, ineffectual. The Sorbonne had the blind instinct, common to all reactionary bodies, to feel that when con-

that should avoid wrath, much more revenge, as studying to deserve well of those who deserve ill of them; that should be so blameless as to force infidels to speak well of them; that should be born again to the purity and simplicity of infants; that should live like the birds of the air, without solicitude; among whom should be the same concord as among members of the same body; where the abundance of one would supply the wants of another, and the evils of some be mitigated by the good offices of others; who should be the salt of the earth; as a city set on a hill, conspicuous to all that are about them; whose abilities should make them forward to help others; to whom this life should seem vile, death desirable; fearing neither death, tyranny nor the devil, as relying on the invincible power of Christ alone; who should live as if every day were their last, and as if they wished for that day when they shall enter upon the possession of a true and lasting happiness."

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fronted by the new learning, they were in the presence of something destined to act powerfully as a solvent upon the existing order. Their fears were no doubt more instinctive than rational, but they were nevertheless well grounded. In applying philological methods to the text of Scripture, as when Erasmus commented upon the Greek text of St. Luke's Gospel, the humanists were endeavouring to establish the same perspective upon current theology that they sought to establish upon current law, medicine, and literature, upon the general sum of current science and art; there was no doubt of that. This would logically lead, it could not help leading, to a re-examination and re-appraisal of traditional accretions to theological theory; and this decidedly would not do. No matter that re-appraisal might vindicate and justify every one of these accretions; the point was that the employment upon them of a secular method, even if it justified them, was inadmissible and impracticable. So, in 1523 the Sorbonne proscribed the study of Greek as an irreligious pursuit. Shortly afterwards, the easy-going Franciscans of Fontenay, dismayed probably at finding out what sort of thing they had been harbouring in their monastery all this time, came down on Rabelais and his friend Amy, and made a clean sweep of every Greek book they had.

This was too much for Amy, who seems to have been of a supersensitive spirit; he broke under it, and ran away, taking temporary refuge in a Benedictine monas-

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tery near Orleans, and eventually finding his way into Switzerland, where he embraced Lutheranism. An alternative explanation of his conduct, perhaps a better one, is that in all this he followed the path of the uncompromising idealist and zealot. In the tenth chapter of the Third Book, Rabelais recalls the incident, and says that Amy came to a decision by aid of the Virgilian lottery:

> When Mr. Peter Amy did in like manner explore and make trial, if he should escape the ambush of the Hobgoblins, who lay in wait all-to-bemaul him, he fell upon this verse in the third of the Æneids:
>
> 'Oh, flee the bloody land, the wicked shore.'
>
> Which counsel he obeying, got forthwith out of their hands, safe and sound, and voided all their ambuscades.

Rabelais, however, took the situation more easily, probably thinking that the Franciscans were not really much interested, that their gesture was more or less *pro forma*, and that the affair would soon blow over. So, indeed, it turned out; he got his Greek books back in a short time. Nevertheless, Rabelais thought that his days in those surroundings were about up; he had got mostly all they had to give him; and he began to look about for a likely foothold elsewhere. Three leagues from Fontenay, at Maillezais, was a Benedictine abbey presided over by Geoffroy d'Estissac, bishop

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of Maillezais, and one of the most influential men in the kingdom. In his earlier years, d'Estissac had been at la Baumette; and if it be true that Rabelais also was there, no doubt they were already acquainted. Whether in this or in some other way, however, Rabelais must have made a considerable impression on d'Estissac, for Rabelais shortly got himself transferred from the Franciscan to the Benedictine order, and entered the abbey at Maillezais. No obscure monk, such as Rabelais then was, could have managed this transfer without the aid of a powerful "pull," for it required the special authorization of the pope to bring it about. Rabelais wrote a petition, d'Estissac undoubtedly furnished the pull, Clement VII promptly complied; and in 1524, or at the latest, early in 1525, Rabelais moved his head-quarters from Fontenay, and entered upon new scenes at Maillezais. There is a faint possibility that he made a short visit to Lyons between-whiles, but that he did so is extremely doubtful; and if he did, nothing happened there, as far as any one knows, that would at all further a reader's acquaintance with him, or with his circumstances.

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Chapter Two

EOFFROY D'ESTISSAC was one of the "great lords of the Church"; on the whole, an excellent specimen of the nobleman-prelate, a type that abounded in France at this period and later, and that found its final development, probably, if not its best, in Richelieu and Mazarin. The most representative man in this category was perhaps a certain Jean de Lorraine, who held the title of bishop-coadjutor of Metz when he was three years old; and later, as the saying went, could almost have held a general Church council all by himself, as he had titular possession of a dozen archdioceses and dioceses. The increasing friction, to which we have already alluded, between the temporal sovereignty of Rome and the sovereignty of the European nationalist monarchs, had worn away the papal authority in certain instances. The Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VII, in 1438, proclaiming the "liberties of the Gallican Church," declared among other matters, that the pope should not interfere in the election of French bishops; and in consequence of this, the relations between Rome and the French branch

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of the Church remained far from cordial for more than half a century. The pope and Francis I, who was not above philandering with Gallicanism to stiffen his side of a bargain with Rome (he came to the throne in 1515, when Rabelais was twenty years old, and reigned until 1547, when Rabelais had but six years more to live), came to a fairly amicable agreement on the same terms, namely: that the king should have the right to name the French bishops; and under this arrangement, which did not as a rule work out to the spiritual advantage of the Church, Geoffroy d'Estissac, who already had several minor benefices, was appointed bishop of Maillezais in 1518.

The accident of birth was responsible for his appointment. He belonged to a distinguished family; but his great luck was in having an older brother, Bertrand, who had had an uncommonly brilliant and successful military career, and who made use of the royal favour to push his younger brother along. Geoffroy was not a bad choice, as bishops went at the time; he was young, just turned of forty, and not perhaps as pious as he might have been, but neither was he unworthy of his responsibilities or inattentive to them; on the whole, he did well. He lived in his diocese, travelled over it incessantly, and kept up an ambitious programme of building. He had the twofold passion that seems to have characterized the nobleman of the French Renaissance, the passion for building, and the

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passion for cultivated company. He immediately took Rabelais into close companionship, as a member of his household. It is thought that Rabelais acted as his secretary, "while waiting for a benefice," or as tutor to his nephew, Louis d'Estissac, the son of the warrior-brother Bertrand, but the foundation for these notions is really very slight. In support of the latter, some say that Rabelais's proposed system of education, which he applied to Gargantua in the First Book, is so detailed as to presuppose some practical experience as a teacher. We cannot see that it does; this presumption seems to us a mare's nest of the first order. The former rests on a line of poetry in a rhymed letter from one of d'Estissac's friends, which may or may not imply, according to the amount of poetic license that one accords to it, that Rabelais was in some sort of personal service to d'Estissac. In a case of this kind, one may easily be too literal; but here is the verse, for the reader's own judgment:

> A ce moyen te print,
> Pour le servir, dont tres grant heur te vint.
> Tu ne pouvois trouver meilleur service
> Pour te pourvoir bien tost de benefice.

Moreover, we cannot make it follow from this poetic expression that Rabelais was waiting for a benefice, but rather that he stood a good chance of getting one; and here, too, something must be allowed for the language of compliment and ceremony, for, as far as is known,

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Rabelais got no benefice in all his life, except a couple of insignificant appointments twenty-five years later, nor does it appear that d'Estissac ever exerted himself to get him one. It is quite competent to suppose that aside from any question of stated service, d'Estissac regarded Rabelais's companionship, friendship, conversation, cultural resources, judgment, and advice, as abundantly worth his keep. Such a view was by no means uncommon, and it was by grace of this understanding that the system known as personal patronage could, as it so often did, work out honourably to both parties concerned in its practice.

II

Rabelais travelled all over the diocese with d'Estissac, time and again, and exercised his incomparable photographic powers of observation and registration upon everything in it, small or great. Hardly a writer can stand with him in respect of these powers; but above and beyond these, if one were asked to name the single quality that distinguishes him above all writers, one would say that it is his apparently unlimited freedom of entrance into his own mind. His almost innumerable running references to the Poitou are perhaps the most conspicuous evidence that he could, at will and without the slightest effort, reach into his own mind and pick out anything that had ever lodged there,

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no matter how minute, trivial, or casual. It is in this freedom that he seems to us to stand alone; no one that we know of can compare with him. M. Clouzot has examined his geographical references to the Poitou; they comprise the names of more than fifty places, many of them too small and obscure to be found on any but a district map, and of these he has almost always to make some little intimate observation that could not naturally arise from any but personal experience. Thus when he has Pantagruel going on a holiday with some of his companions, "they passed by Ligugé, visiting the noble abbot Ardillon; then by Lusinian, by Sansay, by Celles, by Colonges, by Fontenay-le-Comte, saluting the learned Tiraqueau, and from thence arrived at Maillezais." He remarks that according to the baptismal records at Thouars, "more children are born in October and November than in the other ten months of the year." The forty-first chapter of the Third Book, in which Bridlegoose gives reminiscences of his days as a law-student at Poitiers, has many intimate local touches. In the story of the lord of Basché, Rabelais speaks of a "summer-house outside the town-gate on the road that leads to St. Ligarius." He mentions the "sweet, easy, warm, wet, and well-soaked soil" of the hemp-fields of Olonne, and remarks that the height of the hemp there is "commonly of five or six foot; yet sometimes it is of such a tall growth as doth surpass the length of a lance."

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Panurge speaks of once having read a chapter of the decretals "at Poitiers, at the most decretalipotent Scotch doctor's," this being Robert Ireland, a Scotsman, law-professor at the University of Poitiers for almost all the first half of the sixteenth century. The people of the island of Ennasin look "much like your red Poitevins." Rabelais speaks thrice of the windmills at Mirebalais, and twice of a certain form of candle in use there, the "nut-candle," the exact nature of which is now disputed. He mentions the grotto of Passelourdin, near Poitiers, on the right bank of the river Clain, and the table-rock which he says Pantagruel set up there for the loafing students of the university to carve their names on; and also the "caballine fountain of Croustelles," a roadside spring to which he thus fancifully ascribes the properties of Hippocrene as sovereign against the stupidities of the students aforesaid. He refers to the folksongs and *noëls* of the Poitou, remarking that an old uncle of his, on his mother's side, named Frapin—he was canon of Angers, and not exactly an uncle of Rabelais, but rather a great-uncle by marriage—had made a book of them; and in the great storm at sea, Friar John of the Funnels sings a verse from one of the Poitevin *noëls* to hearten the terrified voyagers on Pantagruel's ship. The Touraine and the Poitou are the two provinces, in fact, that figure most largely in Rabelais's writings. Rabelais even has circumstantial accounts of rural fairs in the

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Poitou, notably those at Niort and St.-Maixent, and of theatrical exhibitions, in the form of farces and mystery-plays, held in various places; we shall speak of these later.

Rabelais visited all of d'Estissac's ambitious projects of construction and renovation, and watched them grow. D'Estissac rebuilt with special interest the choir and transept at Maillezais, and carved his arms on the pillars; he cherished a pious sentiment for being buried there. He rebuilt the priory of Hermenault, not far north of Fontenay, the deanery of St.-Hilaire at Poitiers, completed the abbey of Ligugé, and made the beginnings of a superb château at Coulonges-sur-l'Autize, near Niort, but did not live to finish it. Some of his work survives, and may be seen to fair advantage today, almost as Rabelais saw it. No doubt, this contact with practical architecture often turned Rabelais's thoughts towards Italy; his humanistic studies had already set them going strongly that way. The military expeditions of Francis I and his immediate predecessors familiarized a great many people with the great Italian architecture, and Francis I, who was always head over ears in building-operations, set the fashion of transplanting its styles; he imported and subsidized Italian artists, among them Leonardo da Vinci, who spent his last years in France; and such of the French nobility as could afford to do so, followed his example. Hence Italy, though exhausted, prostrate, and broken up by a

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long series of petty wars, was yet regarded by the French humanists—to whom their own land and its times seemed more than half barbarous—as a spiritual home; much as the accomplished American of today regards those parts of a depleted Europe where the older culture still prevails. In a dedicatory introduction to a work on the topography of Rome, by the Italian, Marliani, which Rabelais discovered during his long-hoped-for first visit to Italy and which he republished at Lyons in 1534, he speaks of Rome as "the world's capital," and says that from the time when he first felt any interest in letters, it had been "the dearest wish of his heart" to traverse Italy. Now that he had done so, he says, in a paraphrase of Juvenal, perhaps unconscious, that he believed "no man's house is more intimately known to its owner than Rome, with all its streets and alleys, is to me."

D'Estissac did not spend much time at Maillezais. He was, as we have said, a good deal on the road, again following a court fashion, whether by accident or by design. Francis I was an inveterate traveller, remaining hardly two weeks at a time in any one place, and diffusing himself around the four quarters of his kingdom at a rate which his court, and especially the poor foreign ambassadors, obliged by etiquette always to drag along with him, found fearfully trying—and no wonder! according to Benvenuto Cellini, it took eighteen thousand horses to move the royal caravan!

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D'Estissac found a more nearly central point in his diocese, at Ligugé; besides, he had a fondness for Ligugé on personal grounds, it having been one of the first benefices that fell to him. The priory there was very old; it had known the fortunes of war in the fourteenth century, and had been repaired. Earlier, the reputation of its founder, St. Martin, had made it a heavily-frequented place of pilgrimage. Its gardens were superb. Since d'Estissac made his actual headquarters chiefly at Ligugé, Rabelais very shortly settled there. A round tower still stands on the premises, called Rabelais's Tower, in which he is said to have had a study; but the earliest mention of this pleasant tradition, so far found, goes back no further than the century after his death, and is very imperfectly authenticated, at that. He divided his time between the priory at Ligugé and the abbey of Fontaine, where he was the guest of "the noble abbot Ardillon," and where plain living and high thinking was the rule.

III

Ardillon's hospitality was cordial and abundant, but extremely simple. He seems to have been one of the best of men, and to have found his chief pleasure in the society of cultivated people. As one considers the remains of this period, one is much struck by the almost wistful eagerness displayed by persons isolated in the

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midst of an untoward society, in drawing men of culture closely about them. Rabelais found an interesting circle at Fontaine and Ligugé; Ardillon pampered him, and kept him for prolonged stays in the ancient abbey. Among the lettered Poitevins who frequented the abbey at this time, were three personages, Quentin, Petit, and Trojan, and a *basochien* (lawyer, member of the bar) named Jean Bouchet, eminent in his profession, who wrote a volume of local history, and a great deal of verse of a plantigrade type, some of which he immortalized in print at Poitiers, in 1545. In this volume he compares Ardillon on his lovely verdant property with Mercury on the plain of Helicon, and pictures his accompanying quartette, Rabelais first, then Quentin, Trojan, and Petit, all three of different estate in life, but all of one disposition towards humane letters, meeting with Ardillon beside the fountain, in the bright morning sun, and giving themselves over to a most delightful conversation. According to the researches of M. Hamon, Quentin, or Quintin, was five years younger than Rabelais, born at Autun, and had led a wandering life. He had gone so uncommonly far afield as Greece, Palestine, and Syria, and had even entered the monastic military order of the Knights-Hospitalers of Malta; then, returning to France, this much-travelled man of the world settled at Poitiers. Trojan was a Franciscan monk, who shortly turned Calvinist, and preached that doctrine so vigorously at

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Poitiers in 1537, about ten years after we meet him at Fontaine, that the university students rose up against him. Little is known of Nicholas Petit; he was of a Normandy family, studied law at Paris, and was licensed to practice. He died at the age of thirty-five, at Persac, in the Vienne, in the autumn of 1532.

Besides these, the group surrounding Ardillon included a regent of the University of Poitiers, Jacques Prévost, doctor of divinity. Jean d'Auton, abbot of Angle-sur-Anglin, was probably an occasional guest, and also a canon of Menigoute, Jacques le Puytesson. Bouchet says that the general subject of the charming conversations that went on at the abbey was *humaine escriture*, the literature of the humanities; it bore upon studies of a lay, or non-professional, character. We at once perceive here a most substantial broadening of Rabelais's literary experience and interest. The literary remains of these habitués of Fontaine cite nothing from Greek letters, and cite only four Latin authors—and those four evidently are singled out chiefly for their style—Virgil, Horace, Sallust, and Cicero. On the other hand, the group paid great attention to the contemporary school of didactic poetry, then in vogue, called the *Grands Rhétoriqueurs*. Ardillon, Bouchet, and Quentin unite in enthusiastic praise of the leading representatives of this school; Quentin calls Jean Lemaire de Belges "the greatest glory and the finest ornament of our times." It must be remarked that

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political and social considerations evidently entered into these estimates, which, judged by a purely literary criticism, appear somewhat inflated; but it must also be remarked that Rabelais's experience was all the larger in virtue of this fact.

Thus Rabelais came into contact with the current practice of poetry. It strikes us as a little strange, indeed, to find him classed by some of his contemporaries as himself among the poets, even the representative poets, of the period. In a polemic of 1537, directed against Sagon, Clément Marot mentions the name of seven poets of reputation, and adds to them the name of Rabelais. Sagon, in reply, acknowledges the fame and qualities of all eight:

On sait assez que ces huit ont renom. . . .

Seven years afterwards, Paul Angier addresses a dedication to the "très-scientifiques poètes Marot, Sainct-Gelais, Héroët, Salel, Borderie, Rabelais, Sève, Chapuy, et autres poètes." Shortly, too, Joachim du Bellay brings in Rabelais among the poets who have waged war on the spirit of Ignorance; and Étienne Pasquier also, on the authority of Marot, cites Rabelais as among the poets, "notwithstanding he wrote in prose the heroic deeds of Gargantua and Pantagruel."

One is rather at a loss to account for this. Rabelais wrote excellent Greek and Latin verse, though apparently not much of it; but this is a weak basis for a

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reputation to rest on, for, as every one knows, it is much easier to write verse in a dead language than in a vernacular. Once in awhile he wrote a letter in rhyme, or took a fling at didactic verse, but the result was never above the kind of thing that any one with a vocabulary can turn out by the yard. For instance, in reply to a letter in rhyme from Rabelais, urging him to come over to Ligugé, the *basochien* Bouchet sends back one of 108 verses, excusing himself on the ground of a pressure of business. Rabelais's letter is dated 6 September, and Bouchet's, 8 September; so it took only two days, even for a man with business to attend to, to roll off this mass of windy platitude and rhetoric. Rabelais threw a few trifles of incidental versification into his *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel;* but some of it is "smouched" from Saint-Gelais, and none of it is above a very low level of poetic mediocrity. Critics have never been able to make anything out of this anomaly; the best one can do is to say with M. Stapfer that while Rabelais is indeed a great poet by way of creative genius, he is but a mediocre versifier. Critical fancy and ingenuity have been busy with various far-fetched reasons why Marot started the fashion of reckoning Rabelais among the poets, but it remained for the moderate and sensible M. Plattard to suggest a sound one. By 1537, as we know from Bouchet, Rabelais's creative genius had brought him into vast renown, and Marot, aware of this, included his name because he needed

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one that should rhyme with "St.-Gelais" in the line preceding. It is in fact gratuitous, when one thinks of it, to assume that Marot regarded Rabelais as a versifier merely because he mentions him in company with other writers who wrote in verse.

IV

By these associations at Ligugé and Fontaine, then, Rabelais was brought into close relations with contemporary vernacular literature; he formed this important acquaintance on the foundation of his previously-acquired familiarity with Roman and Greek literature, and with the current Latinity of the humanists. Speaking generally, it was the rise of nationalism, the process of centralizing political government, and the diffusion of printing, that combined to fix the vernacular language, to force out Latin from service as a written medium among spoken tongues and dialects, and to bring about the emergence of a national literature. In point of order, continuity, promptness, and abundance, this development is best observable in England; but the same line was followed strictly in Portugal, Spain, and France. The one exception is furnished by the people who have always seemed to specialize in incomprehensible anomalies, the Italians. Centuries before political consolidation took place, Italy had consolidated a literary language and produced a

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national literature. Odd and anomalous, too, is the fact that Petrarch, perhaps the one man who, except Dante, did most to bring this about, seems to have done so by accident rather than by design. He sometimes wrote in Italian, but really disparaged it in favour of Latin, and thought nothing of his own Italian poems; yet it is by these, rather than by his Latin writings, that in modern times he has always been known and judged. In France, the book-famine of Rabelais's childhood, which we have already mentioned, was relieved in his prime by a sudden and copious outburst of books in the vernacular, side by side with Latin, from the presses which Francis I had set up or subsidized. In the eighth chapter of the Second Book, Gargantua contrasts, after the manner of fathers, his son Pantagruel's educational advantages with his own; he writes to Pantagruel just as Rabelais himself might have written to a youth of the generation next after him:

> '. . . the time then was not so proper and fit for learning as it is at present, neither had I plenty of such good masters as thou hast had; for that time was darksome, obscured with clouds of ignorance. . . . Printing likewise is now in use, so elegant, and so correct that better cannot be imagined. . . . I see robbers, hangmen, freebooters, tapsters, ostlers, and such like, of the very rubbish of the people, more learned now than the doctors and preachers were in my time. . . . The very women and children have aspired to this praise and celestial manna of good learning.'

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—and these observations, but little exaggerating the swift development that actually took place, may be understood of the dissemination of literature in the vernacular, as well as in the learned tongues.

Foreign letters and foreign scenes were not unknown to the group that now surrounded Rabelais. Quentin, as we have observed, was acquainted with Greece, Syria, and even with the Holy Land. Jean d'Auton had accompanied Louis XII on his great military expedition into Genoa and Lombardy, in the capacity of historiographer. Jean Bouchet had been subjected to Italian influences in 1497, at Lyons, which was the most considerable centre of humanist culture in France, and hence the rendezvous of many cultivated Italians. He knew Italian modes of versification, and had an ambition, never fulfilled, towards writing in the sonnet-form. Ardillon himself seems to have had some acquaintance with Italian letters. This range of reading, observation, and experience, reviewed in conversation at Fontaine and Ligugé, was a new thing to Rabelais, and it profoundly affected his attentive mind.

V

Here for the first time, moreover, Rabelais came into close contact with public affairs. Of these, the most important were related to predatory enterprises of the French kings in Italy, and the violent collisions

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of both predatory interests and personal ambitions between Francis I and Charles V of Spain. These involved endless and intricate diplomatic manœuvres, and kaleidoscopic combinations of intrigue and military force, which continually embroiled the pope, the rulers of the small city-States of Italy, and the rulers of most of the three hundred small principalities that are now roughly represented by the territory of Germany and Austria. It is unnecessary to recount all this in detail; the story is essentially very simple and thoroughly modern. The city-States of Italy had an enormous trade, and were rich; Venice, for example, had three thousand merchant vessels on the maritime highways of commerce, and drove a roaring trade in silk, glass, and luxury-products of gold and silver. The neighbouring kings of France and Spain strove to annex these territories for precisely the same reasons that modern republican France strove for fifty years to annex the rich border provinces of Alsace and Lorraine—there was money in them. To the north of France lay the Netherlands, also very rich; they had an immense trade, an immense production, centring in Bruges, Ghent, Rotterdam, Liege, Brussels, Utrecht, Delft, and other prosperous towns. The king of Spain, Charles V, ruled the Netherlands; he always regarded them as a sort of special personal property, for he was born at Ghent; the French king, Francis I, wanted to get them away from him. The situation was ob-

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scured by the specious sanctimony of pretext; it was superficially complicated by intrigue, by the manœuvres of political trade-and-deal; such situations have always been thus obscured and complicated, probably never more so than at present; but there was no aspect of it which is not finally reducible to the standard formula of two dogs fighting over a bone. The position of the pope is puzzling to us only because we are accustomed to think of the papal authority as purely spiritual. At that time, quite apart from his spiritual authority, the pope was an Italian prince, governing a territory which amounted to about one-fourth of the Italian peninsula; and he was, like any other ruler, eager to stretch his territory advantageously, and eager to resist any inroads on it; and hence he was as deep as any one in diplomacy and militarism, and often bent the influence of his spiritual authority to the service of purely secular ends.

Rabelais was in the entourage of d'Estissac, living at Maillezais and Ligugé, from some time in 1524 to some time in 1527; he was about twenty-nine when he went there, and thirty-two when he left. During these four years came the culmination of the competitive foreign policies of Francis I and Charles V; it was a most lively time. Francis I came to the throne in 1515, Charles in 1516. To the north of France lay the Netherlands, where Charles was sovereign; to the south lay Italy, where Charles had a strong

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position, occupying the duchy of Milan and the old kingdom of Naples, which embraced the island of Sicily. To the east of France lay the ramshackle union called the Holy Roman Empire, of three hundred petty States located in the area of what is now Germany and Austria and portions of the new Succession States. The emperor of this rag-bag was chosen by a body of seven electors, consisting of three archbishops, the king of Bohemia, and three other petty princes. Charles's grandfather, Maximilian, had been emperor, and Charles was expected to take his place. Thus Francis I saw a prospect that his kingdom would be encircled by a Spanish-Italian-German-Dutch alliance, engineered by Charles V, and he felt towards it precisely as in our time William II felt towards the similar prospect of an English-French-Russian encirclement of Germany, engineered by Edward VII. There was a little matter of *revanche* also at stake, as in the modern instance of Alsace-Lorraine; Charles V was avowedly out to recapture the rich duchy of Burgundy, which Louis XI had lifted from Charles's grandmother, and incorporated into France.

To counter on the policy of encirclement Francis I tried to get himself elected emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The electors were cordially open to corruption, and the electoral contest between himself and Charles resolved itself at once into a matter of competitive bribery, in which the King of France was

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outbid; Henry VIII of England was also in the race, as a kind of dark-horse candidate, but evidently did not see enough in the position to warrant the investment. Francis, the loser, used up the fortune of Crœsus in his campaign fund, and one can only imagine what Charles must have spent to win over him. But win he did; and Francis, choosing to attack him where he seemed weakest, and where the pickings seemed best and easiest, opened a campaign against him in Italy in 1521, two years after the election. The fortunes of war went to and fro for four years; and in 1525, when Rabelais had been but a few months in his new surroundings, the French were defeated at Pavia, and Francis I was sent into Spain as a prisoner, where he remained for a year; his mother, Louise of Savoy, meanwhile acting as regent of France.

Rabelais may very well have been on hand at Poitiers to witness the tremendous excitement caused by the visit of a royal master of requests, who gave news of the great disaster at Pavia, and bade the inhabitants consider themselves in a state of war. Again, he might have been on hand when the royal suite stopped at Poitiers on their way to Spain to give hostages for Francis; there he may have seen Francis's devoted and highly-gifted sister Marguerite—known as Marguerite of Angoulême, or of Alençon, or of Valois, but best known now perhaps as Marguerite of Navarre—to whom in later years he dedicated his Third Book.

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In 1527, while Rabelais was still at Ligugé, there happened two events of the first importance to those who were anxiously watching the course of public affairs; the resumption of war against Charles, and the sack of Rome. The treaty which ended war in 1526 gave Charles a hegemony in Italy; and this raised a storm in all the Italian states. The pope, Clement VII, organized a league of nations, known as the Holy League of Cognac, which Francis joined at once, and war began again. Some of Charles's mercenary soldiers, under command of Charles of Bourbon, finding themselves unpaid, unfed, and in a miserable condition, got out of hand, assaulted Rome and ravaged it, took the pope prisoner, and kept him under guard, by an odd coincidence, of the same Spanish captain who had kept guard over Francis I two years before. Charles V validated the capture, and announced that he would hold his distinguished captive for a ransom of 368,000 écus. The effect produced by this *coup* upon popular sentiment in all Christian lands may be imagined; and its influence upon conversation in the informed and interested circle at Ligugé may as easily be imagined.

VI

France's domestic affairs at this time gave as much food for thought and reflection as her foreign affairs.

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The first ten years of Francis's reign put the nation in a brilliant light before the world. Francis did many good things, promised to do many more, meant to do many more. His temperament was such that if he promised to do a thing, he fully meant to do it, and would do it—if some one did not intervene meanwhile and get him to do something else. The French humanists, led by Budé, had plenty of experience of this exasperating trait in the matter of his plan, which bade fair to hang fire forever, to establish the Royal Professorships, on the foundation of what is now known as the College of France. Francis tried to induce the colossal Erasmus of Rotterdam to take the direction of this inchoate institution, but after looking the situation over and nibbling at the offer with very long teeth, the great humanist decided not to bite. Francis has always popularly had the name of being a good king, but fundamentally he was far from that; he was one of the very worst. He came into a kingdom that was wonderfully, miraculously, prosperous in an economic sense; so prosperous that even doing his best—and he did do his best—he was simply unable to waste enough to bring his subjects down to a reasonable and normal level of destitution in his own lifetime. But any practiced eye could see that this prosperity was going on momentum only, the momentum given by the competent economic policy of Louis XI, and that the

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direction of affairs by Francis I would sooner or later bring it to a dead stop.

The story of Francis's fiscal policy is so ludicrous that we wish we might tell it in detail for its own sake, instead of merely giving its bearings on the development of our subject. This period is usually characterized by "the rise of the bourgeois"; it should rather be characterized by the emergence of a brand-new type of bourgeois. Louis XI had given a great stimulus to what may be called the working bourgeois, the producer, manufacturer, trader, merchant; so that by 1515, when Francis I began to reign, an observer remarked that all kinds of people had gone into business, at a ratio of fifty to one over the time of Louis XI, and that there were more of them now in the little towns than there were formerly in the large cities. We have already mentioned in our preface the recruiting of this type of bourgeois from the peasantry; the bourgeois of this type understood commodities, he thought in terms of commodities, as the peasant does, and his idea of business was simply that of producing and distributing commodities. His economics of trade were as simple and sound as the peasant's. Paper-business, business in credits and exchanges, business that somehow apparently brought profit with nobody handling any actual goods or doing any actual work—this he knew nothing whatever about. The French peasant instinctively distrusted paper; he made all his bargains with-

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out contract, and drew back in his shell before any kind of written or printed matter; and the working bourgeois had a strong flavour of this same conservatism in his spirit.

This was the type of bourgeois that Louis's free-trade policy had brought so far to the front at the end of thirty-two years; he died in 1483. The lifetime of Rabelais, who was born in 1495, was so far coincident with its rise; and, dying in 1553, he was destined to see its eclipse by another type, an eclipse so complete that, as an official declared before the Parlement of Paris in 1560, there was more actual wealth in the city of Antwerp than in all the towns of France. At the time of which we are writing, 1524-1527, when Rabelais was at Ligugé, one could easily see the eclipse beginning to set in.

The new type was the bourgeoisie of security-holders, money-lenders, credit-mongers, stock-jobbers, lawyers, and office-holders. The fiscal policy of Francis played directly into their hands; and immediately Italian and German bankers and money-changers swarmed in and settled on the wealth of France like a plague of locusts. "They come into the kingdom every day," said deputies to the States-General at Orléans, in 1560, "with nothing but pen and paper in their hands, and in no time at all they are rich." By the end of Francis's reign, they controlled the king, the court and the budget, extorted licence after li-

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cence, concession after concession, monopoly after monopoly. "The traffic in money increases," declared in 1563 the Parlement of Paris, in a remonstrance to the king, setting forth an economic doctrine that would have been cordially endorsed by Louis XI at one end of French royalty's calamitous economic experiences, and by Turgot, Quesnay, and du Pont de Nemours at the other. "It is the end of honourable commerce, the breaking-down of the nobility and of labour, for it is pre-eminently vested in foreign hands. The sound resources of this kingdom lie in abundant harvests of grain, wines, and other agricultural products. The commerce in these ought to be kept up, because it lends itself to none but an honourable profit. Its processes of distribution are such as bear the light of day." As for the credit-mongers, the Parlement warns the king (Charles IX) that he will get no service out of them except on their own terms; "far likelier he will be eaten alive by them, as his father was."

To get money for his four unsuccessful wars with Charles V of Spain, for his court, his building-projects, his incessant travel, and all the rest of his apparatus of luxury, Francis resorted, among other expedients, to the sale of offices, and to the wholesale creation of more offices to make more sales. His successor continued this practice, and it is one of the most amusing things in the world to see how blandly and blindly this interesting dynasty sold itself literally out of every pre-

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rogative it had. Francis's predecessors left him the throne of a personal ruler; he was sovereign over the lands of France, its finance, its justice, its choice of peace or war, its entire programme of foreign and domestic policy. He left his successors scarcely any actual sovereignty at all, and what he did leave was pretty well finished off by Henry II. In the department of justice, for instance, Francis created twenty councillors to the Parlement of Paris, each one of whom paid him three thousand gold écus for his job; he appointed fifty-six extra magistrates of the high court. In the provinces one saw the same thing going on—the Parlement of Toulouse grew from twenty-four members in 1515 to eighty-four in 1559, that of Bordeaux from twenty to eighty. He created a number of courts of the second order, in order to multiply offices; and around all the courts and principal offices swarmed an ever-increasing horde of lawyers, notaries, barristers, sergeants, clerks. These people were irremovable, and their conduct of office was not subject to competent review; they had paid for their offices, and might do what they liked with their own. They moreover regarded bribes and fees as a legitimate return on their investment, and it is hard to see that they had not some force of logic behind their view. Everyone complained of the open and notorious merchandizing of justice, and especially of the exactions practiced by clerks and sergeants; an orator of the Third Estate

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called these last the "butchers, harpies and griffins of the people." But nothing could be done; they had bought away the whole sovereignty of France piecemeal. They organized themselves into defensive groups, societies, bureaux, and "chambers," like the commercial associations and clubs of today, to maintain their resistance against any invasions of their privileged rights. The administration of the country's finances took precisely the same course under Francis I as the administration of justice.

This state of things, and the rapidity of its acceleration from bad to worse, should be kept very clearly in mind whenever one reads those passages which tempt one to think that Rabelais has his spear set for the bourgeoisie; for example, the chapters on Gripe-men-all and the Furred Law-cats, in the Fifth Book. As early as 1524, when he went to live at Maillezais, there is no possible doubt that a bourgeoisie of job-holders, "men of the robe," bankers, shavers, and speculators, had emerged as a distinct new order, in contradistinction to the working bourgeois who dealt in actual goods, whether as producers, processers, or distributors. In the next quarter of a century this class made immense gains, and the entire producing and merchandizing class, whether bourgeois or peasant, was pushed much closer to the wall. So far, indeed, had matters gone by the time Rabelais wrote the episode of Gripe-men-all, say by 1552, that one could even see the beginning

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of a new parvenu aristocracy, with a new and definite *esprit du corps*, and showing an imitative interest in things of the spirit, especially in architecture, sculpture, and painting, at least by way of patronage.

VII

It may be seen from all this, we think, that in his three years of association with the circle surrounding d'Estissac and Ardillon, Rabelais had come a long way from the more academic group at Fontenay. Not only his intellectual horizon, but his social horizon, had been vastly extended. He came into a more mature measure of values; looking back at Tiraqueau, Bouchard, Cailler, and at the sort of thing they exercised their minds on, he realized, probably, that he was looking at a bourgeois group, albeit of the best type, limited pretty strictly to class-ideals, class-conventions, and that under the constraint of these ideals and conventions, their learning had become effervescent and had gone a little to their heads. He was perhaps amused to find that he himself had taken their discussions more seriously than he thought he had; for now he had passed over to another type of mind, in his association with those who were about the nobleman-prelate. They were more detached, objective, humorous, free-thinking. They were secure in their positions, and quite sure of themselves; they were not

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beholden to the bourgeois, not beholden to the Sorbonne; their observations and reflections were not constrained by a constant, self-conscious, and uneasy reference to bourgeois ethics and gentilities, or estopped by bourgeois authoritarianism. It was to this group that Rabelais belonged by nature, though by birth he was alien to it; his view of life was theirs, his demands on life were largely theirs, he was at home with them. Thus his intellectual and social progress from Fontenay-le-Comte through Maillezais and Ligugé was an orderly and normal development.

This fact seems not to be given due weight by the critics who in every period since his day have shown themselves uncannily fascinated by "the secret of Rabelais," and in pursuance of this will-o'-the-wisp have attributed one or another secondary social or ethical motive to his writing. Hardly a critic but has seen him at work on some kind of *Tendenzschrift;* and in their keenness on the red herring of *Tendenz,* they have interpreted him in ways that to those who without prepossession simply follow out the course of his experience, seem highly fanciful. One might suppose that the twentieth century would have outgrown that kind of criticism, but there now comes M. Abel Lefranc with a superb specimen of it, as true to type as any of those which he has lent the force of his encyclopædic learning to destroy. He finds the great "secret" to be that Rabelais forsook Christianity for rationalism, and

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was seized with a lively desire to propagandize for his new faith; and that this doctrine of atheistic rationalism is the "substantific marrow" in the bones of his *Pantagruel.* M. Lefranc's order of evidence for this theory is truly traditional. The genealogy of Pantagruel appears to him as a parody on the Scriptural genealogy of Jesus; and the excursus on the Deluge, in Pantagruel's genealogy, anticipates certain points of rationalist criticism on the book of Genesis. Gargantua's letter, in the eighth chapter, with its elevated observations on the destiny of man, makes no reference to the Christian doctrine of a future life; no hint of the soul's immortality appears in it. The resurrection of Epistemon, in the thirtieth chapter, parodies two miracles attributed to Jesus by the Evangelists, the raising of Lazarus and the raising of the daughter of Jairus; certain features being borrowed from the one, others from the other. Panurge's anointing Epistemon's neck with "a little ointment which he called resuscitative," recalls to M. Lefranc the Saviour's anointing of the man born blind, and his anointing of the deaf-mute. Panurge's giving Epistemon a glass of white wine to drink after his restoration to life, looks back to the order given by Jesus that Jairus's daughter should have something to eat. It is on the strength of these bits of internal evidence, and several more like them, that "a different Rabelais stands before us." By way of external evidence, M. Lefranc cites the

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opinion of many contemporaries (among them Calvin!) to the general effect that Rabelais was a cynical atheist, and that his works, by intention, disseminated atheism.

Now, really—really, now, one must say, what a piece of extravagance all this is! M. Lefranc's internal evidence may be judged as it stands; by exactly the same procedure one could run down a "tendency" towards a system of non-sectarian religion in the life of Don Quixote, or toward transcendentalism in the setting of the Homeric poems. As for his external evidence, one has but to recall the literature of the Wace-Huxley-Argyll-Gladstone controversy over agnosticism, at the close of the last century, to perceive forthwith that it is simply worthless. For our part, the longer our acquaintance with Rabelais, the greater our doubt of there being any secondary social purpose whatever behind his writings; we suspect "the secret of Rabelais" to be merely the gratuitous projection of an over-imaginative critical faculty. We cannot reconcile ourselves to the notion that a man of his temperament, his mode of mind, and his rich experience of all phases of human life, would ever feel called upon to propagandize for any creed or opinion. It is contrary to common observation; such men do not insist strongly upon any body of belief, even their own. He was a great artist, and his work abundantly serves the primary social purpose served by all great art; accidentally, too, in so doing it serves many a secondary and special purpose,

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as, again, all great art does—its universality and timelessness make it most fruitfully applicable to endless kaleidoscopic sets of special circumstances. Who can, for instance, read about the behaviour of Diogenes during the Corinthian war, in the prologue to the Third Book, without finding himself instantly transported, body and soul, back amidst all the solemn foolery that raged in every provincial town in the United States, on our entrance into the late war? Who, again, can look at the occupations and preoccupations of the inhabitants of the island of Ruach, as Rabelais describes them in the forty-third chapter of the Fourth Book, without being at once conscious of a close and most disquieting analogy with the general civilization of the United States? Who can behold the fanatical animation of Homenas, as he apostrophizes the sacred decretals, without being aware of the essential temperament that comes out in the hundred-and-one manifestations of philosophical absolutism that are forever rife among us?

> 'When, ha! when [cries Homenas] shall this special gift of grace be bestowed on mankind, as to lay aside all other studies and concerns, to use you, to peruse you, to understand you, to know you by heart, to practice you, to incorporate you, to turn you into blood and incentre you into the deepest ventricles of their brains, the inmost marrow of their bones, the most intricate labyrinth of their arteries? Then, ha! then, and no sooner than then, nor otherwise than thus, shall the

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> world be happy. . . . Then, ha! then, no hail, frost, ice, snow, overflowing, or *vis major;* then, plenty of all earthly goods here below. Then, uninterrupted and eternal peace through the universe, an end of all wars, plunderings, drudgeries, robbing, assassinates (unless it be to destroy those cursed rebels, the heretics). Oh then, rejoicing, cheerfulness, jollity, solace, sports and delicious pleasures, over the face of the earth. Oh what great learning, inestimable erudition and godlike precepts are knit, linked, rivetted and morticed in the divine chapters of these eternal decretals!
>
> 'Oh how wonderfully, if you read but one demi-canon, short paragraph, or single observation of these sacrosanct decretals—how wonderfully, I say, do you not perceive to kindle in your heart a furnace of divine love, charity towards your neighbour (provided he be no heretic), bold contempt of all casual and sublunary things, firm content in all your affections, and ecstatic elevation of soul even to the third heaven!'

Might this not be the doctrinaire Marxian speaking, with a volume of *Das Kapital* in his hand; might it not be the doctrinaire free-trader, protectionist, prohibitionist, single-taxer; might it not be Mr. Henry Ford or Mr. Hoover, apostrophizing the doctrine of mass-production, and holding aloft the blue-prints and specifications of a completely industrialized society? "Then, ha! then, and no sooner than then, nor otherwise than thus, shall the world be happy"—those words invariably recall us to ourselves, they bear us instantly across the field of every ephemeral, petty, and importunate absolutism, and give us a reviving vision of the

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victorious stretch of humanity that lies beyond it in an immeasurable future.

Largely because the writings of Rabelais so lavishly supply the needs of the human spirit in such special circumstances as these, they fulfil the primary social function of great art; but we are wholly unable to discern any secondary social purpose behind them. Indeed, as everyone who exercises a purely literary criticism is aware, art fails of its primary function in pretty straight proportion as such secondary purposes are discernible behind it. We simply cannot imagine so much as the frailest limitation of evangelism or propagandism upon the mind which put such words in the mouth of Homenas, and then met them with the exquisitely appropriate critical implications that proceed from Epistemon and Panurge. Such a mind has passed too far from Fontenay-le-Comte for anything like that; we would maintain it if the evidential value of M. Lefranc's citations were raised a hundred-fold. M. Lefranc may justly reprove us for our ignorance; alas, already his every page reproves us for that; yet seeing what monumental learning comes to, when once it gets the scent of *Tendenz* in its nostrils, we almost wish our ignorance were greater than it is.

As little, on the other hand, may one infer that Rabelais was not serious; that in the face of human error and distress, his works breathe the spirit of a mere fastidious and skeptical levity. We see him as

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little the "*buffon sublime*" of Charles Nodier as the atheist-propagandist of M. Lefranc. Sparing the reader more than one conspicuous example, we rest our case in saying that no "*philosophie bouffonne et sage délire*" could invest the account of the Abbey of Thélème with its accent of profound and noble seriousness. Rabelais simply had a realist's measure of human character, of its approximate rate of progress in perfectability, and of the means appropriate to facilitate and assist its progress. He also knew that people were much better attracted into the path of wisdom than lectured, argued, or herded into it; and while he no doubt wished they might be wiser than they were, he knew that no one could make them so by force, whether by the force of logic or by the force of compulsion.

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Chapter Three

RABELAIS left his pleasant life at Maillezais and Ligugé in 1527, no one knows why. The simplest way of accounting for this move is by saying that he probably wished to take up medical studies; when next one hears of him, at least, that is what he is engaged in. One does not hear of him, however, until 1530; the three years intervening are blank; nothing whatever is known of him or of his pursuits, during that time. Certain facts recorded of him between 1530 and 1532 give rise to some pretty satisfactory and interesting conjecture concerning his whereabouts and occupations, and we therefore recount them here, claiming nothing for them but what appears upon their face:

1. In September, 1530, Rabelais appeared at the University of Montpellier, dressed as a "secular" priest, and without authorization from his superiors in the Benedictine order, to take his degrees in medicine. He registered with the Faculty of Medicine, 17 September, paying an écu, gold; and he chose as his spe-

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cial preceptor or patron, the regent Jean Esquiron, or Schyron, in Latin *Scurronus*.

2. On 1 December, a few weeks after his entrance, Rabelais proceeded bachelor of medicine, paying a gold écu for registration of the degree.

3. From 17 April to 24 June, 1531, Rabelais delivered the stated course of lectures in medicine which was incumbent on every bachelor of medicine to deliver. As a subject, he chose to comment on the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates and the *Ars Parva* of Galen. He intimates that these lectures were popular; there is casual mention by him that they were delivered to a "full house" (*frequenti auditorio*).

The feat of entering the University of Montpellier in September and proceeding bachelor in December, strongly suggests that Rabelais must already somewhere have done a great deal of work in medicine; for the course regularly leading to that degree could not well have occupied less than two years. He seems not to have been in a position to do much of this work before 1528, so the inference is possible that he was engaged with it between 1528 and 1530. There are further facts, also, which appear to have a bearing on his situation at this time, as follows:

1. Rabelais published the first instalment of his *Pantagruel* in 1532. In it he shows an intimate knowledge of Paris; the kind of knowledge that no one possibly could get up from reading or hearsay, or from a

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brief casual visit, so perfectly but that a native of Paris would every now and then catch him tripping; [1] and, moreover, this knowledge seems extremely fresh and vivid—one would say he might be writing on the spot. There seems no other time for him to have got this knowledge but that which elapsed between 1528 and 1530.

2. There were close relations, amounting almost to some kind of traffic-arrangements, between the Benedictine houses of St.-Pierre at Maillezais and of St.-Denis at Paris (where, by the way, Rabelais has Pantagruel residing while in the city). The Benedictines could not authorize a monk of their order to matriculate regularly in a university (for which reason, no doubt, Rabelais later took the law in his own hands when he entered Montpellier in the guise of a "secular" priest), but d'Estissac, who was abbot of Maillezais as well as bishop, could, by stretching a point, authorize Rabelais

[1] As an example of the kind of thing we refer to, we remember a rather recent novel of Sir Philip Gibbs, who has visited New York, and is said to be a trained journalist and reporter. In this he has a Cunard steamship dwarfed by skyscrapers at its pier, though there are no skyscrapers, probably, within a mile of the Cunard piers. He has a bridal couple crossing town from the pier to Fifth Avenue, through a narrow street like a canyon, with high buildings on each side, though there is no such street in the whole section. He has this couple, at some point on this route from the pier to the Hotel Plaza, able to see the financial district, and the inference is that they passed directly through it. He has locomotive-bells on the Elevated; and so on. Even Bret Harte, who lived for years in England, has a train pull in with a man's body hanging to the cowcatcher, though English locomotives have no cowcatchers. As far as we know, no one has ever detected an inaccuracy in Rabelais's details of Paris and its life.

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to put up at the Hôtel St.-Denis as long as he liked, and prosecute his medical studies informally; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that this arrangement would at once suggest itself in the circumstances.

II

So there is all reasonableness in the conjecture that Rabelais spent a good part, probably the larger part, of these three blank years at Paris, studying medicine. But it would seem that a considerable remainder of this period must be otherwise accounted for. We know that by 1532, Rabelais had made certain friendships with notable humanists who lived in the southwest of France, and enmity with at least one notable man down there, the eccentric and truculent Julius Cæsar Scaliger; and these point to a short period of residence at Toulouse, and to a longer one at Agen. The chain of demonstration is not as a whole especially interesting, but certain facts that work into it are worth mention. Scaliger was what we should now call an irregular practitioner of medicine; he had no degree and no academic training, but seems to have had a first-rate clinical instinct. He was an Italian, originally called della Scala, a nickname of his father, whose real name was Bordone. He settled in Agen in 1524, and stayed there the rest of his life, forming around him a coterie of disciples who got the benefit of his instruction on very

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liberal terms, but with the strict understanding that none of them should practice in Agen. He had competitors, however, whom he was given to attacking in print with great violence, under the thin disguise of fanciful names. One of these was the Jean Schyron who in 1528 became professor, and subsequently chancellor, at Montpellier, and who was then in practice at Agen. Like Scaliger, he had a sort of school; he not only poached on Scaliger's practice, but on his pupils. It is extremely likely that Rabelais was in the enemy's camp at Agen; one may infer it from Rabelais's relations with Schyron at Montpellier, and also from the fact that Scaliger lampooned Rabelais viciously in verse under the name of Baryœnus ("the besotted"). Dr. de Santi has observed that this name might originally have been Rabyœnus ("the dipsomaniac"), and that Scaliger's son Joseph, the celebrated Protestant scholar who became professor at the University of Leyden, in the general toning-down which he gave his father's poems before publishing them in collected form, may have transposed the consonants. But Baryœnus, or Rabyœnus, is certainly set before us in these epigrams as a very hard nut; a degraded man of the cloth, twice a monk by different orders, hanging about taverns and resorts of ill-fame, satirical, obscene, and suspected of atheism. Defamers of Rabelais's personal character in all generations since

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his time have always been able to draw on Scaliger at sight for whatever they needed.

Rabelais no doubt liked to keep his energetic professional colleague stirred up. Speaking seriously in a letter to Erasmus in 1532, he merely observes that he is well acquainted with Scaliger, and that it was Scaliger who had defamed Erasmus; in his dedication of the letters of Manardi, he speaks with dignified severity of the school of medical innovators and pragmatists to which Scaliger belonged; taking words out of the mouth of Pliny wherewith to complain of their "learning by experimentation in a series of deaths," so that they were more to be dreaded than disease itself. But in his lighter moments, he was not too dignified to be above abetting Étienne Dolet in the construction of lively epigrams against Scaliger; his gift for that sort of thing was pretty regularly to the fore. He was a friend of Dolet, whom Scaliger hated; and this, in addition to his being a competitor's pupil, and representing a rival system of medicine, was a third spur to Scaliger's animosity. If, as Dr. de Santi thinks is possible, Rabelais first attached himself to Scaliger, on arriving at Agen, and afterwards went over to the opposition, it made him by that much the more odious to Scaliger.

If Rabelais left the stirring scenes at Agen soon after Schyron, as seems rather likely, he probably went directly to Toulouse, where the school of medicine then

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had a greater reputation even than that of Montpellier. In all its works and ways, Toulouse was a bourgeois town; its fortunes had been made chiefly in the indigo business, and it was no stranger to a hard-mouthed fundamentalism. The Parlement of Toulouse had a reputation for rigour that gave rise to the popular saying, "Toulouse for severity, Bordeaux for humanity, Rouen for mercy, Paris for justice." Toulouse was not spiritually a healthy place for Rabelais, nor was it at the moment a healthy place, in another sense, for anybody; Rabelais seems to have arrived just in time to encounter a great outbreak of the plague. It is unlikely that he remained there long. He made friends, however, of the leading humanists of Toulouse, and followed their subsequent fortunes when they got in trouble with the Inquisition. In the twenty-ninth chapter of the Third Book, Pantagruel praises "the most learned, virtuous Dr. Boysonné," law-professor at Toulouse, "whom I do so love and respect for one of the ablest and most sufficient in his way, that anywhere are extant." Another great humanist there was Jean de Pins, who had an experience with the Inquisition that is worth recounting as a specimen of the kind of thing that went on in Toulouse even after the palmy days of the White Company, which, two centuries before, under "the ferocious Folquet," bishop of Toulouse, used to deal with persons suspected of heresy by the simple expedient of murdering them out of

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hand. Jean de Pins was the lucky possessor of a fine manuscript of the Greek text of Josephus's history of the Jews. Erasmus wrote to him in behalf of the printer Frobenius, asking for the loan of this manuscript, for publication. The letter was intercepted by spies; and the bare name of Erasmus was so suspect in Toulouse that de Pins was immediately had up before the court, and required to produce the text for examination. After the manuscript had been thoroughly combed by interpreters, the inquisitors finally got it through their heads that there was no heresy in it, and de Pins was released from custody; but it was only in 1532, about a year after Erasmus had written, that he was finally able to send the manuscript off by the hands of one of his humanist pupils, Georges d'Armagnac, bishop of Rodez, who took it to Lyons, where Rabelais then was, and Rabelais forwarded it to Erasmus.

Such was life in the Midi for the humanist of those days! The idea of the Reformation, thriving under persecution, was making itself felt everywhere in the region, and everywhere the Inquisition was at work to stamp it out. The thousands of students at the University of Toulouse, in the full current and countercurrent of spiritual contagion, young, ardent, irrepressible, became riotous and unruly; and their elders and preceptors, whether justly or unjustly, were held responsible for their irregularities. In June, 1532, just

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about the time de Pins was getting off the manuscript to Rabelais for transmission to Erasmus, Jean de Caturce, a professor of law at Toulouse, was burned alive for heresy in the Place-St.-Étienne; and this savage act caused a great revulsion in the students who witnessed it. Rabelais interpolated a casual reference to it in the fifth chapter of his Second Book, where he says that Pantagruel did not stay long at Toulouse. Seeing that down there they scrupled not "to burn their regents alive, like red herrings," Pantagruel said, "'Now, God forbid that I should die this death, for I am by nature sufficiently dry already, without being heated any further.'"

III

It would appear, then, that Rabelais probably divided his three blank years, 1528-1530, principally among Agen, Toulouse, and Paris. There is reason to think that the civilization of Paris had no great charm for him. He found the intellectual world of France revolving around Lyons rather than Paris, and he made his way there the moment he had his profession in hand; he seems never to have put in any more time in Paris than was necessary. It would be easy, though we think erroneous, to let his writings make out a case for his sharing the provincial's fine contempt for the metropolis. What would Paris be, indeed, to a son of

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the Touraine, hailing from Chinon, "famous city, noble city, ancient city, yea, the first city in the world, according to the judgment and assertion of the most learned massoretes"? France had not yet been consolidated into such unity of national sentiment but that there was plenty of local and regional superiorities remaining; the time of Louis XI was too recent, their tenacity too strong. Indeed to this day, it seems to a visiting outsider that Marseilles, for instance, with its unbroken history of twenty-five centuries of corporate existence, rather patronizes Paris as a coming city, all very well in its way and as far as it has gone; while Narbonne, serene in its survival of three distinct and powerful civilizations, hears of Paris now and then, knows there is such a place—or was, the other day—but really cannot be interested in keeping track of all the upstart towns that come and go; there are too many of them.

One delights in Rabelais's recognition of the dogged persistence of these local loyalties and sentiments; it appeals to a sound instinct, for it is upon just these, in their resistance to the force of a levelling uniformitarianism, that the *interest* of a civilization depends for its existence. One rejoices in his broad exhibit of the provincial spirit in its disregard and disparagement of the metropolis, for it is largely upon such traditional feuds and dislikes that these character-breeding loyalties feed. One might put it that the civilization of France,

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whatever the gain that might accrue to it from complete standardization of sentiment and centralization of loyalty, will be *interesting* only so long as Narbonne figuratively thumbs its nose at Marseilles, Toulouse at Lyons, Chinon at Tours, and all of them at Paris. Rabelais was probably too experienced, too much a man of the world, to be expressing in his own person the crudeness of the provincial animus against Paris, or even to sympathize with it, but he perfectly understood it; he had no trouble whatever in projecting himself for the moment into all the narrowness and prejudice of the provincial mind. Thus in the story of Seyny John, he has "the gaping hoydens of the sottish Parisians" crowding in from all sides to see the quarrel. When Pantagruel entered Paris, "everyone came out to see him (as you know well enough the people of Paris are sots by nature, by b-flat and b-sharp) and beheld him with great astonishment, mixed with no less fear." This is all in the spirit of a true son of the Touraine. He utters the stock provincial criticism, too, in remarking that Paris is not really a French city, but "patched up of all nations and all manner of men," as Gargantua found it to be when he stopped there for two or three days (as, for part of his purpose, at least, so many strangers have since done) for the sake of "inquiring what men of learning there were then in the city, and what wine they drunk there." He even voices the provincial self-conscious deprecation of metropolitan

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"The gaping hoydens of the sottish Parisians."
Book III, Ch. 37.

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looseness when in the fifteenth chapter of the Second Book he describes Panurge's suggestion of a new way to rebuild the walls of Paris.

Gargantua found no men of learning, and like his son, Pantagruel, was greatly pestered by crowds; "for the people of Paris are such fools, such puppies and naturals, that a juggler, a carrier of indulgences, a sumpter-horse, a mule with his bells, a blind fiddler in the middle of a cross-lane, shall draw a greater confluence of people together than an evangelical preacher." Finely provincial, too, is the imagination which devised an appropriate way of dealing with the crowd by a Gulliverian application of hydraulics, which "drowned two hundred and sixty thousand, four hundred and eighteen, besides the women and little children." The last exquisite touch of provincial imagination is put on—imagination surely could go no further—in the remark that this exploit having been conceived *par ris*, that is, by way of a joke, "that city hath been ever since called *Paris;* whose name formerly was Leucotia (as Strabo testifieth, *lib. quarto*) which in Greek is Whiteness, because of the white thighs of the ladies of that place."

IV

After this flight on the wings of conjecture over Agen, Toulouse, and Paris, there is satisfaction in find-

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ing oneself on solid ground at Montpellier, in the early autumn of 1530, with Rabelais's time accounted for until the end of October, 1531, in—but for one exception—an apparently uneventful course of study. This exception is found in the interesting fact that at some period in his connexion with the university, he went on the stage in an amateur performance of the play which Mr. Granville Barker resurrected and revamped for performance a few years ago, in a version made by M. Anatole France. In the thirty-fourth chapter of the Third Book, there is mentioned the names of seven men who took part with Francis Rabelais, at Montpellier, in "the moral comedy of him who had espoused and married a dumb wife." Most of these names have been found on the register of the university; two of them subsequently came in for some distinction; and the production would seem to have been an affair of college dramatics.

The interest of this is in its bearing on Rabelais's general knowledge of the stage. M. Gustave Cohen has gone at great length into this phase of Rabelais's intellectual activity, and has assembled the evidence which makes him out a considerable enthusiast of the drama, as the drama stood in the days before its modernization under the influence of Lope de Vega. Some have thought that Rabelais wrote the *Dumb Wife*, but this is quite improbable; it no doubt belonged to the fine old repertory of the French theatre—a good mediæval

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farce, like *Pathelin*. Of the extent to which Rabelais was ever actually engaged with the drama, in any capacity, there is no evidence beyond this chance record of his having trod the boards on one occasion at Montpellier; but there is every evidence that he had a first-class technical acquaintance with dramatic production, and every likelihood that this acquaintance was the fruit of highly interested observation, if of nothing more nearly professional.

During his lifetime there was an uninterrupted series of performances here and there in the Poitou, of mediæval mystery-plays, morality-plays (of the type of *Everyman*, with which Mr. Rann Kennedy and his accomplished wife have latterly made us acquainted) and farces. Our old friend Jean Bouchet, the lawyer-poet, guest of d'Estissac and Ardillon, was the great organizer of dramatic festivals all over this region. He directed the *Passion* at Poitiers in 1508, and was continually being called upon from all quarters of the Poitou for help and advice, as the regional authority in such matters. He was consulted from Issoudun, in 1535, where they were short of a competent director to put on the tragedy of *Christ Slain;* Bourges, Nantes, and finally even Bordeaux, called him in. Rabelais had plenty of opportunity, during his residence in the Poitou, to become a connoisseur in the technique of these naïve representations, in which clergy and laity alike took part; for which the clergy made no bones of lend-

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ing their vestments as costumes, and in which the most sacred matters and personages were set forth with an informality that a later taste, tinctured by a precisian Protestantism, finds most irreverent, though there are still survivals of this excellent naïveté in one or two modern operas, as in Massenet's *Manon* and Gounod's *Mireille.*

Rabelais's description of the disorderly scenes at a performance of the *Passion* at St.-Maixent, goes far to show his connoisseurship. Doubtless no such scenes ever actually took place, yet it is worth recalling that a decree of the Parlement of Paris took notice of "lascivious farces and mummeries . . . from which has proceeded an endless run of adulteries, fornications, scandals, scurrilities, and scoffings." In the twenty-seventh chapter of the Third Book, Panurge speaks of no sooner entering the parquet at St.-Maixent than all who were there, both actors and audience—

> 'did fall into such an exorbitant temptation of lust that there was not angel, man, devil nor deviless upon the place who would not then have bricollitched it with all their heart and soul. The prompter forsook his copy; he who played St. Michael's part came down to rights [literally, came down by the *volerie*]; the devils issued out of hell, and carried off most of the pretty little girls who were there; yea, Lucifer got out of his fetters: in a word, seeing the huge disorder, I disparked myself forth of that inclosed place, in imitation of Cato the censor.'

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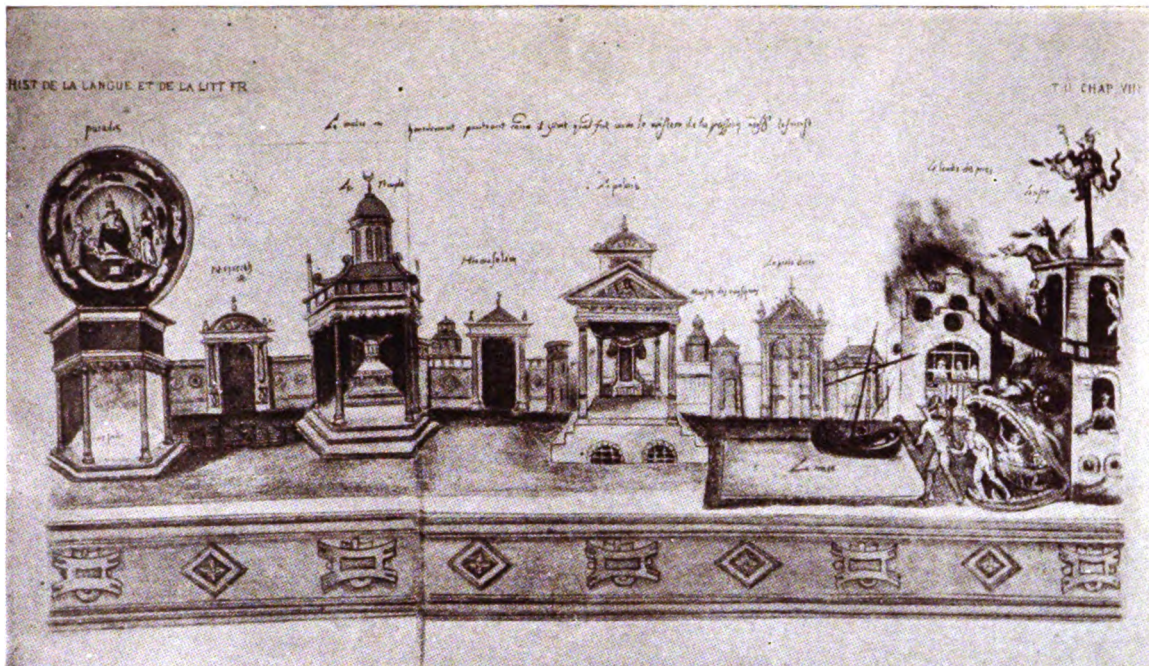

Stage-setting for the Mystery of the Passion, played at Valenciennes in 1547. Paradise is represented at the left, the mouth of hell at the right

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Here we have a set of technical terms employed with professional ease and accuracy. The prompter is called *porticole*, and his libretto with the stage-directions marked is correctly called *copie*. The *volerie* is the movable scaffold, or hoist, which brought the saints and angels down to earth from the heights of paradise; and so on. Finally, Panurge even uses the correct technical word *déparquer* to describe his exit.

Again, in the thirteenth chapter of the Fourth Book, we have the story (this time certainly apocryphal, as Villon died very young) of François Villon, in his old age, undertaking to put on a version of the *Passion*, in the Poitevin dialect, at St.-Maixent. He had everything in order, but needed properties, chiefly costumes. The town authorities helped him out with these, but Villon had still to have some ecclesiastical vestments "to dress an old clownish father greybeard who was to represent God the Father"; so he applied to Friar Stephen Tickletoby, sacristan of the local Franciscan friars, to lend him a cope and a stole. Tickletoby refused, and Villon got revenge by dressing up all the people who were to act the part of devils in the piece, lying in wait for Tickletoby on his way home from a begging expedition, and frightening his young mare so that she literally kicked him to pieces. This recital is one of the best examples of Rabelais's incomparable power of telling a story; but it is so long that to quote it here would be too great a diversion from the point

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in hand. What we may notice now is that here, too, we have an easy and complete familiarity with the technique of the stage.

V

Rabelais shows as great familiarity with the literature of the stage as with its technique. He drew on it largely as a source of secondary inspiration, and is always dropping into his narrative bits of allusion or quotation that would be well understood by his readers. When Panurge mentions having had "'another very filthy and beastly process against master Fohfoh and his deputies,'" or when he drops into dog-latin, in his question, "'*Et ubi prenus?*'"—his readers caught the reference as quickly as we would catch any reminiscence of a line from *As You Like It*, or a saying of Bob Acres or Macheath. He seems to have known the farce of *Pathelin* by heart. M. Cohen has counted up twenty-five references to it, and says that there are probably more to be found. In his dealings with what may be termed the secular or profane theatre, as distinguished from the repertory of miracle and mystery, Rabelais canvasses not only the resources of farce, but those of the comic monologue. In the fifty-fifth chapter of the Fourth Book, he quotes a saying of the *Franc-Archer de Baignolet*, the great masterpiece in this category, as *Pathelin* is the great masterpiece of farce. He borrows

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from the *Archer*, again, the last line of Badebec's epitaph; and there are here and there unmistakable reminiscences of other well-known comic monologues.

An English reader should give particular attention to the fact that Rabelais not only lifted these occasional odds and ends from the repertory of comic monologue, but also sometimes took over the literary mechanism of the monologue, which was a thing well understood and highly appreciated by readers in his day, but is entirely foreign to us; so foreign to us that, perhaps more than anything else, it makes difficulties for the English-speaking reader and interferes with his free progress. This mechanism consists of an enormous verbal accumulation, sometimes a catalogue of nouns, sometimes a torrent of almost synonymous descriptive terms, sometimes an unaccountably long list of qualities and attributes, such as Rabelais often pitchforks into a recital. This kind of thing was part and parcel of the comic monologue, and generally characteristic of the serious dramatic monologue as well; it was a delight to audiences; the greater a writer's fertility in it, and the greater his dexterity in stringing it out, the greater his acceptability as a master in this order of dramatic composition. When this is understood, the English-speaking reader finds a new interest in these torrents of language, because he is contemplating a special, distinct, and recognized mode of literary art. If, moreover, he be led to compare Rabelais's proficiency in

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this mode with that of his predecessors, he will see with renewed wonder and admiration, how easily it transcends and effaces anything that can be ranged beside it. In the story that we just now mentioned, for example, when Villon's devils set upon Tickletoby—

> the filly was soon scared out of her seven senses, and began to start, to funk it, to squirt it, to trot it, to fart it, to bound it, to gallop it, to kick it, to spurn it, to calcitrate it, to wince it, to frisk it, to leap it, to curvet it, with double jirks and bum-motions; insomuch that she threw down Tickletoby, though he held fast by the tree of the pack-saddle with might and main.

Here the English version perfectly reproduces the vividness and force, as well as the richness, of dramatic invention, that are felt in the original. An example in the same order, drawn out to greater length, is in the story of Diogenes and his tub, in the prologue to the Third Book. It is again, perhaps, not easy for an uninformed or unimaginative reader to assess the resources of dramatic inventive power displayed in the three whole chapters that are taken up by Xenomanes's description of Shrovetide, because of our unfamiliarity with this special mode of dramatic art; but once we conceive of this mode as a regular and traditional department of dramatic practice, once we put ourselves in the position of those to whom it was the expected thing, the admired and appreciated thing—in short, when we bring ourselves to judge the literary quality of this

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gigantic exhibit in the light of its original intention—we are absorbed in it as a most sensational *tour de force* of genius.

Furthermore, Rabelais adopted from stage-practice the device of the dramatic dialogue, put his trade-mark upon it, and inserted it into his work, whenever he had occasion to do so. The conversation between Panurge and the semiquaver friar who answered only in monosyllables is exactly in the run of mediæval comedy dialogue; and so is the colloquy of Panurge and the sheep-herder Dingdong—it could be put on any stage. The fifth chapter of the First Book is made up entire of stage-dialogue, so vivid, brilliant, and well-sustained that it would "produce" perfectly, without the change of a word, in any comedy of the period. We say again, if the English-speaking reader will remember Rabelais's knowledge of mediæval drama, his interest in its technique and its literature; if he will recall the characteristics of that drama, and especially such of its modes as are now obsolete; he will find his understanding and appreciation of Rabelais greatly forwarded. Even when Rabelais is not writing in a technically dramatic mode, he often writes for the dramatic *sense* in a reader, for the specific reading-habits that are bred by contact with the drama. Thus the catalogue of Gargantua's games, the catalogue of food-stuffs offered in sacrifice by the Gastrolaters, and the long roll-call of venomous creatures named by Eusthenes,

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are not actually perhaps in the dramatic mode, but to the reader's mind they sufficiently suggest the dramatic mode to gain sponsorship from the dramatic tradition.

VI

On 23 October, 1531, Rabelais signed a settlement of accounts, presented by an officer of the University of Montpellier, and there is no further record of him for seven months, or until 3 June, 1532. There is a far-fetched conjecture, drawn from the dedications of his three scientific works, which are all addressed to Poitevins, that he revisited the Poitou at this time; but the evidence is extremely frail. He may have done this, or he may not; in the absence of any probability, one conjecture is as good as another—all cats, says the proverb, are grey in the dark. M. Lefranc thinks that with this period one might perhaps associate another visit to Paris, because in the first instalment of the *Pantagruel*, which was very soon to appear, Rabelais's memories of Paris seem so fresh as to suggest that they had been recently renewed. This conjecture is ingenious, but, again, the evidence in support of it seems incompetent. It is pretty clear, however, that at some time during this period he settled at Lyons, "where the home of my studies is," as he wrote a little later, with evident satisfaction; and here, while waiting for a clientele in medicine, he acted occasionally

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as a publisher's adviser, and also, it seems, as proof-reader, which at that time was the most highly respected and heavily pampered position in the whole régime of a publishing-house. At this time Lyons, as became the "intellectual capital of France," was one of the great centres of the European book-trade; its position corresponded to that of Frankfort in Germany. The method of marketing books was by putting them on sale at the great quarterly commercial fairs; one of these was held early in January, one shortly after Easter, and the others on 4 August and 3 November. They lasted two weeks. There is a faint suggestion of this practice, the mere shadow of a shade, in the "spring lists" and "fall lists" that are got out by some modern publishers, often with a smaller subsidiary "Easter list" and "Christmas list." At these periods, merchants and commercial representatives—"buyers," as we now call them—swarmed into Lyons from Italy, the German States, Switzerland, and all parts of France. The house of Sebastian Gryphe, with which Rabelais had entered into relations, was very strong; in the thirty-two years from 1524 to 1556, Gryphe published more than a thousand titles in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, and French. Rabelais seems to have been in a way intoxicated by the atmosphere of books and publishing, for he set off on a tremendous debauch of press-feeding. In the summer of 1532, he prepared the three learned works that we have referred to; he

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finished one in June, one in July, and the third in September. Money was no object to him, for there was no money in authorship in those days; the publisher got it all—publishing was a real business then, and knew how to exploit its servants properly—so Rabelais's headlong literary activity had no motive of gain, but only of getting his work into print.

The first of these works was the medical letters of Manardi. This Manardi was a physician of Ferrara, who, thanks to the liberalities of a rich acquaintance, Alfonso Trotto, had been enabled to specialize in the study of Greek and Latin manuscripts of classic treatises on medicine. His interest was that of the humanists, in clearing these texts of glosses and accretions, and measuring thereby the effect of tradition upon the current practice of medicine. He had published one set of his letters in 1525, which Tiraqueau, at Fontenay-le-Comte, had promptly got hold of and recommended to Rabelais in the highest terms, "as if they had been taken down from the mouth of Pæon or Æsculapius." When a second series of letters appeared at Ferrara, Rabelais thought it useful to publish an issue of them at Lyons, and gracefully dedicated his volume to Tiraqueau. The dedication was kindly, and it was appropriate. In spirit, Rabelais had far outgrown the rather constricted milieu of Fontenay, but Tiraqueau was still a friend, and indeed, Rabelais always wished him well and spoke well of him, even in the latter days of

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Tiraqueau's estrangement and congealment. Even in the Fourth Book, which Tiraqueau consented in suppressing in 1552 when his old friend had but so little time to live, Rabelais speaks of "that learned, wise, courteous, humane, and just civilian, André Tiraqueau." Students of Rabelais have seen obsequiousness in this, and are inclined to regard it as an anticipatory plea-in-avoidance. We are not so sure. After all, Tiraqueau *was* all that, within the limitations set by his experience and his powers of assimilating experience; and who could say that by taking thought he could have transcended those limitations by so little as a cubit? The mature lucidity of mind and largeness of temper, so characteristic of Rabelais, inevitably breed a kind of practical determinism in one's view of human conduct. Men do about the best they can, as a rule, and it is the mere delirium of egotism to expect more from them. One may smile at their inconsistencies and stupidities, one may make a diverting study of their absurd faults and failures, and yet be quite aware that the essential humanity underlying these untoward manifestations is pretty sound and by no means wholly unlovely. It is precisely this disposition, this *temper*, that marks a social critic of the very first order; it is precisely this that puts a Socrates, a Rabelais, a Cervantes, miles out of sight beyond a Juvenal or a Swift. The general cause of humanism owed something fairly handsome to Tiraqueau, and Rabelais

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was cheerfully ready to acknowledge the debt. Tiraqueau had done his bit to renovate the study and practice of medicine and literature, as well as of law; he had been sincerely interested in bringing medicine out of "the mists of Gothic ignorance," as Rabelais well put it, no one knowing better how impenetrable that ignorance was. Making allowance for the ceremonious language which was then common to epistolary style, especially in dedications, but which nowadays seems rather high-flown, Rabelais tells no more than the simple truth when he says to Tiraqueau that "I am aware and well remember how much the medical art, for the more successful promotion of which we are striving our utmost, is indebted to you who have so assiduously celebrated its praise in your excellent dissertations on the regional laws and customs of the Poitou."

Rabelais's turn for picturesque metaphor and vigorous writing breaks through even the formalities of a dedicatory letter. In his encouragement over the professional situation in general, he sees the public, long victimized by charlatans, beginning to show a "rhinoceros's nose" in smelling out their ignorant pretensions; and he compares those who persist in sticking to quackery with men clinging to spars after a shipwreck, even though "they see that their ship of bogus knowledge is breaking up and riddled with leaks." Except for some poetic trifles which we have already

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noted, this dedicatory letter is the first published production of Rabelais's pen.

A little more than a month later, 15 July, 1532, Rabelais went to press with the substance of his Montpellier lectures on Hippocrates and Galen, with a dedicatory letter to d'Estissac. In this letter he tells how he came to publish the book. In making up his lectures, he says, he compared current texts of the *Aphorisms* and the *Medical Art* with manuscripts to which he had access, and with one in particular which was uncommonly fine and clearly written. In the course of this comparison, he was struck by many omissions and perversions in the current text, and had corrected and commented on them in a body of notes. When he was in Lyons next year, Gryphe ran across this material among his papers, and proposed publishing it as part of a series of standard medical treatises that he had long been thinking of getting out; the "handy-volume series" had been an early specialty of Lyons publishers, by way of popularizing classical works in pocket-editions, and Gryphe had in mind to make up this volume primarily as a student's manual. Rabelais agreed the more readily as he had already himself had a notion of publishing it; and the only difficulty was the mechanical one of getting the notes down into a form compact enough for marginal printing on a page of the required format. This was somehow managed, however, and the book appeared in 16mo., entitled *Hippocratis ac*

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Galeni libri aliquot ex recognitione Francisci Rabelæsi, medici omnibus numeris absolutissimi.

Two months later, 4 September, 1532, Rabelais published a literary curiosity, purporting to be a copy of an old Roman will, the last testament of one Lucius Cuspidius. With it he printed the text of a Roman bill of sale; the two together making a volume that amounted to no more than a pamphlet. This he dedicated to his old friend Amaury Bouchard, who in the old days had tilted at Tiraqueau over the absorbing question of woman's social place and function. Bouchard had come up in the world since then, and now had a place in the royal council, and bore the title of master of requests. Dropping in on Rabelais at Lyons, one day, and looking over his literary treasures, Bouchard noticed the manuscript copy of Cuspidius's will, was much taken with it, and wanted to have another copy made from it for his own collection. Rabelais, however, did better than this; he had the manuscript put in type, and two thousand copies printed for the general market. Rabelais was actually let in by this text of Cuspidius, for the whole thing was a forgery of rather recent date, but he never knew it; the forgery was discovered by the Archbishop of Tarragona in 1587, more than thirty years after Rabelais's death. Meanwhile, the document had been re-edited once or twice by contemporaries of Rabelais, who were as thoroughly taken in by it as he was. In his dedicatory

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Τηρίβαζος

καὶ περιαρτῶσι· τὸν τηρίβαζόν φασιν ὑπὸ τῶν περ
σῶν συλλαμβανόμενον, σπάσασθαί τε τὸν ἀκινάκην
ἔυρρωστον ὄντα καὶ διαμάχεσθαι, μαρτυρομένων δὲ
καὶ βοώντων, ὅτι συλλαμβάνουσιν αὐτὸν βασιλέως
κελεύσαντος αὐτίκα τὸ ξίφος μεταβαλεῖν, καὶ τὼ
χεῖρε συνδῆσαι παρασχεῖν· ἆρ' οὖν οὐχ ὅμοιόν ἐστι
τὸ γινόμενον, οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι διαμάχονται συμφο
ραῖς, καὶ διωθοῦνται τὰ πράγματα, φυγὰς ἑαυτοῖς
μηχανώμενοι, καὶ παρατροπὰς τῶν ἀβουλήτων, ὁ δὲ
δεισιδαίμων οὐθενὸς ἀκούσας αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰ
πὼν, ταῦτα πάσχεις ὦ κακόδαιμον ἐκ προνοίας καὶ
θεοῦ κελεύοντος, ἔρριψε πᾶσαν ἐλπίδα, προήκατο ἑαυ
τὸν, ἔφυγε, διεκρούσατο τοὺς βοηθοῦντας πολλὰ τῶν
μετρίων κακῶν, ὀλέθρια ποιοῦσιν αἱ δεισιδαιμονίαι. μί
δας ὁ παλαιὸς ὡς ἔοικεν ἔκτινων ἐνυπνίων ἀθυμῶν
καὶ ταραττόμενος, οὕτως κακῶς ἔσχε τὴν ψυχὴν ὥς
τε ἑκουσίως ἀποθανεῖν, αἷμα ταύρου πιών. ὁ δὲ τῶν
μεσσηνίων βασιλεὺς ἀριστόδημος, ἐν τῷ πρὸς μεσση
νίους πολέμῳ, κυνῶν λύκοις ὠρυσομένων ὅμοια, καὶ
περὶ τὴν ἑστίαν αὐτοῦ τὴν πατρῴαν ἀγρώσεως ἀνα
βλαστανούσης, καὶ τῶν μάντεων τὰ σημεῖα φοβουμέ
νων, ἐξαθυμήσας καὶ κατασβεσθεὶς ταῖς ἐλπίσιν αὐ
τὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀπέσφαξεν, ἦν δὲ ἴσως καὶ νεικίᾳ τῷ

μίδας

αἷμα ταύρου.

ἀριστόδημος

νεικίᾳ

Rabelais's manuscript notes

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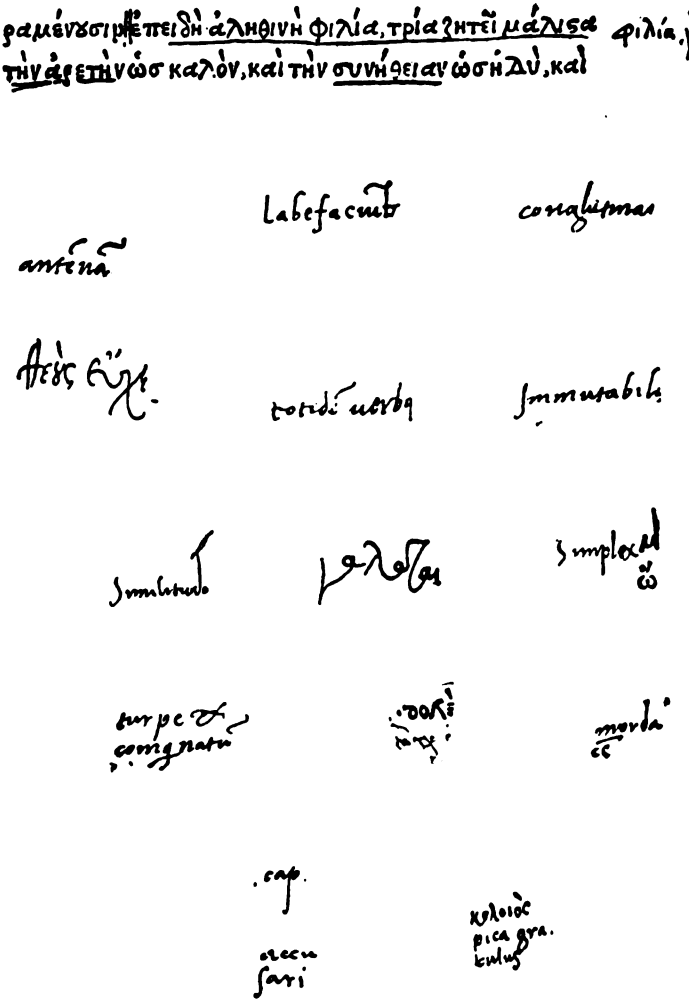

on a text of Plutarch

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letter to Bouchard, Rabelais makes the interesting observation that he had run across several persons who said they had the original text of Cuspidius, but he had never been able to get sight of it. This may not be taken as intimating any suspicion of the document, we think, but only as pointing to what turned out to be a natural and necessary coincidence.

Rabelais published still another learned work—his last—at Lyons, two years later, 31 August, 1534, under circumstances which are worth noticing on account of the light they throw on his character. It was in that year that he had realized "the dearest wish of my heart"; he went to Italy with Cardinal du Bellay, arriving at Rome, 2 February. He had three principal objects in view: first, to converse with the most celebrated men of learning in Italy, and get their opinion on certain questions that were open in his mind; second, "in pursuance of my profession," to look up some drugs and other medical supplies, which he heard could be had in Italy, but were wanting in France; and third, to write a description of the appearance and topography of Rome, "as with an artist's pencil, so that there should be nothing which my writings would not competently describe to my countrymen, on my return."

He worked at this last enterprise with great diligence, commandeering the help of two intelligent young men in du Bellay's suite. The cardinal was himself so interested that he gave it all the time he

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could spare from the duties of his political mission; he even went into antiquarian research, and had excavations made in a vineyard of some value, which he bought outright for the purpose. They had to remain in Rome longer than they expected, and Rabelais had got so far as to begin the actual writing of his book, when to his surprise he found that a book on the same subject, by an Italian, Marliani, had just come off the press. Far from any disappointment or hurt pride of authorship, he says that the appearance of this book "was as great a relief to me as the intervention of Juno Lucina is to women in hard child-birth." Marliani's arrangement of material is altogether different from the one that Rabelais laid out, but far from disapproving it, "I congratulate him heartily for having surpassed me." Marliani has done better "than could be expected of anyone nowadays, however learned he might be"; so well has he done, indeed, that "I personally owe as much to him" as any and all amateurs of the subject are henceforth bound to owe him. Marliani's book must come out in France, and come out at the earliest possible moment it did. Nothing could be handsomer, more generous, sincere, self-effacing; Rabelais's first and last thought of his own fruitless work was when he swept the whole thing into the wastebasket. He came back to Lyons, probably towards the end of May, and by the end of August Marliani's book was off the press.

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Rabelais's scientific works, especially in medicine, may perhaps not be held to enhance his reputation; though it is always a question whether we can quite put ourselves back so completely into his time as to assure ourselves that we are not expecting too much of him. His edition of the *Aphorisms* and the *Medical Art* was successful; it was reprinted several times; but the sale of a book is notoriously no index of its quality. His erudition was great, and he had a sound knowledge of Greek, such as very few had. According to M. Auguste Germain, he was the only medical lecturer at Montpellier from 1488 to 1593 who expounded a Greek authority by the original text. But he does not show anything that we could call a sharp critical sense or a thorough critical method, in his dealings with manuscripts. It would be unjust to set him down as a mere reactionary against the experimental or laboratory method in medicine; in 1537 he demonstrated anatomy by dissection, a most advanced and radical measure, which he was among the first, if not actually the first, to take. Yet, as M. Plattard, who is always most judicious, points out, his published work never shows any thought of checking up his ancient authorities by the results of subsequent medical experience; and hence it is quite absurd to make him out, as some do, to be the forerunner of certain of the more modern scientific methods in medicine. It must be re-

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marked, however, that there was a good deal of time intervening between his lectures at Montpellier, or even their publication in book-form, and his anatomical demonstration at Lyons. Five years gave him plenty of time to learn, if he needed to learn—and we cannot be quite sure that he did—that the experimental method is susceptible of use as well as abuse. Possibly—we say it with all diffidence—M. Plattard has not allowed quite enough leeway here. Possibly Rabelais's mature judgment may have been that a practitioner earns the right to experiment only after he has assimilated everything that the classic authorities can give him. One would like to think this of Rabelais; and perhaps it is chiefly, though we hope not wholly, because we would like to think it of him that the few known facts of his own professional behaviour seem to us measurably to accord with this view. Certainly this is the most that could be said. M. Plattard has every probability on his side in suggesting that the sustained and methodical effort necessary to produce creditable work in science, would be repugnant to Rabelais's temperament; indeed, Rabelais promptly and forever lost interest in scientific productions the moment he was launched on an enterprise of creative imagination. It would be a disservice to him to pretend that his work in science had more significance that it obviously has. Our only suspicion is that his professional conservatism may not have been so nearly purblind as is sometimes supposed.

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VII

Simultaneously with the publication of the *Hippocrates and Galen*, at the August fair in Lyons, 1532, there appeared an anonymous book of folk-tales, called *The Great and Inestimable Chronicles of the Huge Giant Gargantua*. Its authorship is quite unknown. Some earlier commentators have thought it was written by Rabelais, but internal evidence makes this absolutely incredible. The book had a great run. In his prologue to the Second Book, Rabelais gives it most generous praise, and says that "the printers have sold more of them in two months' time than there will be bought of Bibles in nine years."

So far from Rabelais's having invented Gargantua, not even did the author of this book invent him. Gargantua was a standing property of the folk-tales that had for generations passed from mouth to mouth; indeed, his feats and prowesses have lasted continuously into the oral folk-lore of our own time. About a quarter of a century ago, M. Jean Baffier went back to his native region of Berry, and reconstructed the fireside stories of Gargantua as he had heard them, as late as the 'sixties, from the lips of his own peasant parents and grandparents; they were still being told by the firelight of winter evenings, exactly as they had been told for unnumbered generations, and as perhaps they still

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may be. M. Baffier's reproduction is one of the most fascinating and enlightening contributions to literature that we have seen in years; though M. Baffier says that the good old people could not rest in their graves if they knew he had brought those stories out in print, such being their inveterate traditional distrust of writing and printing, and their invincible suspicions of anybody who had anything to do with these new-fangled devices. To give an idea of the wonderful flavour of these stories, we may mention that except the date of the Saviour's birth, the only historical date that seems to count for anything in the minds of those who told them, is that of the Roman Invasion. Julius Cæsar, "*le vieux Césaire Brise-tout*," is a vivid figure of yesterday. Very little that was worth while had happened since then; everything had steadily gone to pot. At every other page or so, Mother Baffier drops in a few words about how much better things used to be managed in the good old days; not the days of her youth, or the days of her parents' youth, but the days before the Roman Invasion. Life around Berry was something that you could really say was worth living, before Old Cæsar Brise-tout came along and knocked everything into a cocked hat.

Gargantua appears in folk-lore as an enormous giant, with an appetite corresponding to his size, and with a highly discriminating taste in food and drink. What he does not know about good wine and good

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cooking is not worth knowing. He is very kindly and well disposed towards the peasantry; and the usual plot of the story is that when something goes wrong with the peasant, or where his work is too much for his strength, Gargantua comes along and helps him out. Sometimes he arrives in the regular course of things, clears up the day's work in no time, and then joins in with all hands in a rustic jollification. The stories are simple and unpretending in their literary mechanism; and the *Great and Inestimable Chronicles* did not go much beyond their predecessors in either particular.

Rabelais saw the *Chronicles;* perhaps he read them in manuscript, or got a look at them in advance of publication. It occurred to him, possibly by some suggestion from the *Chronicles,* that he might turn his own hand to something of the kind. He was thinking of going back for a few weeks in his native region, over Chinon way, where he had not been since he was a boy. After nearly a year in the activities of the Renaissance capital, he was going back to the rural districts of the Touraine, "to my cow-country," as he says, "to know if any of my kindred there be alive." He had been at work on his new idea, probably for a couple of months or more, and he took his idea with him.

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Chapter Four

THUS it was that at the November fair of 1532 in the city of Lyons, there was put on sale *The Horrible and Dreadful Feats and Prowesses of the Most Renowned Pantagruel;* and this was Rabelais's first venture into popular literature. He published it under an assumed name, an anagram of his own, perhaps easily decipherable by his intimates, Alcofribas Nasier. Like any serious scholar and professional man, he probably did not care to be popularly known by his connexion with a mere lively *jeu d'esprit,* and there was also a special reason for a little extra caution at this time. By a rather odd coincidence, four days before the *Pantagruel* was put on the market, Rabelais was appointed physician to the great hospital at Lyons—a very distinguished professional situation, indeed—and he may naturally have reflected that the trustees of the hospital might not care to have the head of their institution starring around the literary world as a writer of romanesque fables, no matter what their merit might be.

There is a little matter of chronology coming in

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here that we must interrupt the narrative to make plain. The reader of Rabelais will save himself a good deal of confusion if he takes pains to remember that the Second Book in our versions was written before the First Book; and the Second Book is the one to which we now refer. In all probability, when Rabelais published this work in the autumn of 1532 he had no definite thought of going on further in that vein. It is true that in the last chapter he says that his readers shall soon have the rest of Pantagruel's history, and promises them that it shall be highly spectacular. "You shall see how Panurge was married and made a cuckold within a month after his wedding; how Pantagruel found out the philosopher's stone; . . . how he married the daughter of the king of India, called Presthan; . . . how he fought against the devil, and burned up five chambers of hell; . . . how he visited the regions of the moon, to know whether indeed the moon were not entire and whole, or if the women had three-quarters of it in their heads"—and so on; and apparently out of mere playfulness, he specifies that all this information shall be available at the next Frankfort fair, not the Lyons fair. Commentators have generally taken this vivid prospectus as evidence that he had at the time some intention of keeping on with this kind of work; although as a matter of fact, not one item of all this ambitious programme did he ever again even refer to. We doubt that he had any such intention.

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These promises seem to us only a sheer flight of fancy. We should say that they are scattered in with no other view than to make a first-rate lively ending to his book, as in fact they do.

The simplest way of accounting for Rabelais's progress in this kind of literature seems to us also the most natural. Probably the great stir made by the *Pantagruel* pleased Rabelais, and put the notion in his head that he could give his new public something even better of the same kind. Therefore he decided two years later to pick up the old familiar figure of Gargantua, reproduce him as Pantagruel's father, and weave another story around him. Whatever his motives and intentions may have been, however, this is what he actually did; and thus it comes about that in our present editions the First and Second Books are printed in logical order, not in the order in which they were written. The Third, Fourth, and Fifth Books continue the story of Pantagruel, and are printed in the order of their composition.

II

So we may now go back to our interrupted consideration of the Second Book. Rabelais picked up his subject, for no discernible reason, out of a very obscure corner of folk-lore. Probably he put down the first name that occurred to him. Possibly it was suggested

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by the unprecedented heat and drouth of the summer of 1532; there is an allusion in the second chapter to a similar phenomenon as accounting for his hero's name. While Gargantua, as we have said, was a well-known personage in current myth and fable, Pantagruel was not. He appears in a mystery-play of the last half of the fifteenth century as a minor devil, a sort of drunkard's genius, who goes about throwing salt down people's throats to induce a thirst that can be allayed only by hard drinking. From this the name became transferred to any constriction of the throat that shows the same symptoms as those which are superinduced by excessive thirst—suffocation and dumbness, for instance, as in the *Ancient Mariner*—

> We could not speak, no more than if
> We had been choked with soot.

So in another drama of Rabelais's time, the question is asked whether one of the characters who pretends to be dumb "has got the Pantagruel." In the seventh chapter of the Second Book, also, the people of Orléans found their throats so dried by astringent wine that they said, "'We have got the Pantagruel, and our very throats are salted.'"

But Rabelais lifts Pantagruel altogether out of his original character, introducing him as an enormous giant, the son of Gargantua, and having many of Gargantua's excellences as well as many of his own. Some-

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times Rabelais reverts to the legend in an incidental way. When he does so, he usually improvises on it and improves it, much as Beethoven does with an insignificant little melody of Paisiello that he had picked up somewhere, perhaps not even remembering at the moment where he got it or from whom. There is a free suggestion of the original legend in the second chapter of the Second Book, for in the mystery-play the demon Pantagruel is represented as being quite at home in the salt water of the ocean; and there is a more definite suggestion in the twenty-eighth chapter, where Pantagruel sows salt in the open mouths of the Dipsodes as they lie in a drunken slumber. Again, in the eighteenth chapter, when Pantagruel silenced the applauding collegians, he so terrified them that at the sound of his voice their mouths instantly became parched, and "they laid out their tongues a full half-foot beyond their mouths, as if Pantagruel had salted all their throats." In the second chapter, Pantagruel's treatment of the Johnsonian archaist from Limoges "was such a terror to him all the days of his life, and he had such a thirst upon him, that he would often cry out that Pantagruel held him by the throat."

The most elaborate ornamentation of the legend, however, is found in the last four chapters of the Third Book. These are an enigmatic and vivacious disquisition upon the herb or plant named pantagruelion, its nature, appearance, the mode of growing and prepar-

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ing it, its uses and its virtues, and the origin of its name. The pantagruelion is simply hemp. Pantagruel was the inventor: "I do not say of the plant itself, but of a certain use which it serves for, exceeding odious and hateful to thieves and robbers, unto whom it is more contrarious and hurtful than the strangle-weed and choke-fitch is to the flax, . . . for we have seen many of those rogues, by virtue and right application of this herb, finish their lives, . . . it was the pantagruelion, manufactured and fashioned into a halter, and serving in the place and office of a cravat." This use of hemp, in the form of a rope, to bring about a sudden and fatal constriction in the throat of malefactors, was the principal reason for its getting the name of pantagruelion. Indeed, it may have borne that name in the popular glossary, though there is no indication of it that we know of in the literature written before 1532.

There is sometimes a further, but largely casual, suggestion of the legend in Rabelais's various derivatives, such as the verb *to pantagruelize* in the first chapter of the First Book, "as you may see in your pantagruelizing, that is to say, in drinking stiffly to your own heart's desire, and reading the dreadful and horrific acts of Pantagruel." But as a rule these derivatives bear a tropical sense, as when in the prologue to the Fourth Book he defines *pantagruelism* as "a certain jollity of mind, pickled in the scorn of fortune"; by

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virtue of which "you see me now hale and cheery, as sound as a bell, and ready to drink, if you will." In the prologue to the Third Book, likewise, he says that by the virtue of pantagruelism as a practical philosophy, or rather as the spirit and temper which floats a sound criticism of life and makes it viable, one may "bear with anything that floweth from a good, free and loyal heart."

The prologue to the Second Book, after some paragraphs of jovial praise bestowed on the *Grand and Inestimable Chronicles of Gargantua*, goes on to say that the author intends to offer the public "another book of the same stamp," in the same line of popular fiction that included several titles which he mentions, such as *Orlando Furioso*, *Robert the Devil* and *Fierabras*, as well as one or two others which he seems to have invented, since there is no record of books actually bearing them. Then he proceeds with his tale. It falls into three parts, or major episodes, with the giant as the central figure throughout: First, the family history of Pantagruel, his early years and education; then his experiences in Paris in company with Panurge; lastly his return to his native land of Utopia on hearing that war had broken out between the Dipsodes and the Amaurots, and his entrance in the war in behalf of the latter, who were his mother's people. The story ends with his victory over the Dipsodes and over their reinforcement of three hundred giants led by the fero-

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"It was the pantagruelion, manufactured and fashioned into a halter, and serving in the place and office of a cravat."

Book III, Ch. 51.

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cious Loupgarou, his entrance into the city of the Amaurots, and the ingenious humiliation devised by Panurge for their mischief-making king Anarchus.

III

Structurally, then, the tale is commonplace enough. One could match it for prospective interest in almost any other story of the period. Great genius as a rule is rather indifferent to the basic material it works with, usually taking what it finds nearest to hand, much as a good cook will make an appetizing dish out of whatever he happens to have. Any story of a giant would do for Rabelais to show his craft on, just as any crew of roistering Flemish peasants would do for Jan Steen or Old Breughel to paint. Rabelais, indeed, is as easy-going and naïve about his architectonics as the mediæval stone-masons were. When it suited him to have them go one way, they went that way, and when another, another. He introduces Pantagruel as a giant, but does not trouble to keep him so throughout; in whole long stretches of narrative, Pantagruel is of only normal human size. Many times one would say that Rabelais had simply forgotten, in his impatient rushing eagerness of narrative, that Pantagruel was a giant and that the details of the story should correspond in scale. Panurge is mostly a great coward, yet on occasion he is made out to be very brave, with no hint

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that he is acting out of character, or that his bravery is exceptional. On some of these occasions, indeed, Rabelais seems to have chosen Panurge only because he happened to think of him at the moment; he could as well as not have substituted one of the other personages in Pantagruel's retinue, who would have been quite in character. One may not look too closely for consistency in any of Rabelais's figures; one finds it pretty well kept up in Friar John of the Funnels, but obviously only because nothing happened to disturb it, and not by reason of any special care or effort. Structurally, Rabelais's work is to be regarded as one regards the cathedrals at Toulouse and Chartres. These speak a language wholly different from that spoken by the cathedral at Cologne, for example; they reveal a different history, a different intention, a different mode of mind. One need not go into the question of comparative merit and interest; all one need do is to mark the difference and be properly appreciative of each after its kind. One is not so enamoured of inconsistency as to disparage the scrupulous regularity of Cologne, or of regularity as to disparage the meanderings of Toulouse. Each awakens a sentiment appropriate to itself. There is no architectural consistency in the city hall of Brussels, yet its incongruities belong to it, they are even interesting and delightful in themselves, and one would not wish to have them regularized.

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Although the giant Pantagruel is the central figure of the story throughout, Rabelais's literary instinct was soon aware of the danger of a monotony that no art could ward off, if Pantagruel were left continually alone on the stage, or surrounded only by minor ancillaries. He saw the dramatic advantage of a contrast of character. As soon therefore as he had Pantagruel well under way, he created Panurge. He was not long about it. There are thirty-four chapters in the Second Book. The first five are taken up with getting Pantagruel off the stocks, the next three describe subordinate episodes in his early career, and in the ninth we learn "how Pantagruel found Panurge, whom he loved all his lifetime." His love seems to have been an indulgent fascination, to portray which throughout —and Rabelais is consistent in that—is in itself a matter of the highest literary art. Panurge's name is derived from the Greek, signifying "a man who could turn his hand to anything"; and Panurge has become the standard type and pattern of the unscrupulous *farceur*, the conscienceless and knavish practical joker, for all fiction since his day. Yet although he diligently practiced rascality all during his association with Pantagruel, as a kind of chartered libertine, it never appears that Pantagruel's character or manners were contaminated by contact with him. One makes the curious observation, in fact, that it is in virtue of this integrity of character and manners that Pantagruel re-

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mains the principal figure. In all his relations with Panurge, Pantagruel appears as a superior being, tolerant, interested, and amused by Panurge's ingenious deviltries, always willing to stand by him against their consequences, but never tempted into any unbecoming action on his own part. In the twenty-second chapter, which describes Panurge's immensely amusing but very knavish revenge on a Parisian lady who had rejected his advances, we see Pantagruel's invariable attitude of indulgent aloofness. Panurge summons Pantagruel to see the success of his trick, saying, " 'Master, I pray you come out and see all the dogs of the country, how they are assembled about a lady, the fairest in the city, and would duffle and line her.' Whereupon Pantagruel willingly condescended, and saw the mystery, which he found very pretty and strange."

Pantagruel met Panurge on the outskirts of Paris, a woebegone figure, fresh from ill-treatment at the hands of certain Turks, who had all but roasted him alive. He was a roaming adventurer, originally from the Touraine, and he replies to Pantagruel's questions in thirteen languages before acknowledging that he can speak French; ill-conditioned and starving as he is, he cannot resist the impulse to indirection and mystification. He promises fidelity to Pantagruel—and curiously, always keeps his word—and says he will tell the story of his late adventures as soon as he has had some food and rest. Pending this, Pantagruel heard

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the cause at law of the lords Kissbreech and Suckfist, and rendered his decision. Then Panurge reappears with the account of his escape from the Turks, and subsequently from their half-wild scavenger dogs; he also ingratiates himself with Pantagruel by a brisk and cynical conversation, interlarded with a couple of stories run off in Rabelais's best vein of story-telling; and then we have the incomparable chapter treating "of the qualities and conditions of Panurge."

What a picture it is! what resourcefulness, ingenuity, and raciness of description go to make it up! There is nothing that we know of in all literature that resembles it; it stands by itself:

> Panurge was of a middle stature, not too high nor too low, and had somewhat an aquiline nose, made like the handle of a razor . . . he was a very gallant man of his person, only that he was a little lewd, and naturally subject to a kind of disease which at that time they called lack of money, . . . a sharper, drinker, roysterer, scowerer, and a very dissolute and debauched fellow, if there were any in Paris; otherwise and in all matters else, the best man in the world.

Panurge was always contriving plots to annoy the police, and he had a special animosity to the professors and the student body of the University of Paris. "As for the poor masters of arts and theologues, he did persecute them above all others, . . . one day that the theologians were appointed all to meet in the Sor-

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bonne, he made a barbonnessa tart," an odious mixture of noisome drugs and filth—

> which he steeped, tempered and liquified in the corrupt matter of pocky biles and pestiferous botches; and very early in the morning therewith anointed all the lattices and grates of the Sorbonne in such sort that the devil could not have endured it. Which made all those good people there to give up their gorges, . . . ten or twelve of them died of the plague, fourteen became lepers, eighteen grew lousy, and above seven and twenty had the pox; but he did not care a button for it.

In his coat, Panurge had "above six and twenty little fobs and pockets, always full"; a knife in one, with which he cut purses; itching-powder in another, which he threw down some stately lady's back; a little leather bottle full of old oil in another, to smutch a new suit or dress—

> under colour and pretence of touching them, saying, 'this is good cloth, this is good satin, good taffeties; madam, God give you all your noble heart desireth,' . . . and with this he would lay his hand upon their shoulders; at which touch such a villainous spot was left behind, so enormously engraven to perpetuity in the very soul, body and reputation that the devil himself could never have taken it away.

In another he had needles and thread, "wherewith he did a thousand little devilish pranks"; for example, he sewed a friar's vestment fast to his gown and shirt, so that at the end of the mass, when the friar would have laid off his vestment, his clothes came with it, to

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the great scandal of the congregation. In another he kept powdered euphorbium, which under a clever conversational pretext he would contrive to shake into the faces of ladies, when he came into their company, and "made them sneeze for four hours without ceasing." Finally, it is noted of him that—

> when he changed a teston, cardecu, or any other piece of money, the changer had been more subtle than a fox if Panurge had not at every time made five or six sous vanish away visibly, openly and manifestly, without making any hurt or lesion, whereof the changer should have felt nothing but the wind.

Such is Panurge—marvellously ready-witted, fertile in imagination and inventiveness, full of confidence in himself and his apparatus of tricks, feline in his total lack of morals or scruple, hypocritical, superficially gifted, endlessly plausible, never disconcerted or embarrassed, fluent, able to hold his own in the conventional manners, graces, and accomplishments of any society, equally at his ease with courtiers and with peasantry, able to turn off a pleasant rondeau, an obscene pun or equivocation, a ribald yarn or a stretch of unctuous pietism, all at a moment's notice—one looks at him with profoundest reverence for the genius that gave him birth. Panurge is beyond dramatization, though several have tried their hand at it, including Grétry and Massenet; no stage can give the scope in which to round out his perfections, one gets but a

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limited, partial, and unsatisfactory view of him. In the whole range of literature, one can count on one's fingers the achievements in character-portrayal which are even comparable with what we see revealed in Rabelais's two masterpieces, Friar John of the Funnels and Panurge.

Panurge and Pantagruel are woven in and out of the last twenty chapters of the Second Book. Sometimes one has a chapter to himself, sometimes the other, and sometimes they are played off against each other in the same chapter. Immediately on the introduction of Panurge, he is made to show off in full character in the long episode of his rampant indelicacy towards the young lady of Paris. He loses no time about distinguishing himself. His behaviour and conversation alike make clear at once what may be expected of him, from the first moment of his attachment to Pantagruel's retinue; and he continues abundantly, prodigally, to fulfil those expectations to the end.

IV

A word may be said here concerning some of the minor episodes of the Second Book. They are in the vein of satire, but in our judgment one who tries to find anything beyond the most obvious of literary purposes in them is simply addling his attention and wasting his time. In the sixth chapter, Pantagruel meets with a

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young man from the region of Limoges, a student at the University of Paris, who speaks to him in a pretentious Latinized macaronic jargon. This sort of affectation was not uncommon; then as now, no doubt, there were many "whose education was too much for their abilities," as the Duke of Wellington so well said, and who gave themselves this kind of airs in consequence. But that Rabelais would go out of his way purposefully to satirize these is extremely doubtful; they were very small game. On the other hand, to reproduce that special lingo on a magnified scale, to maintain its lifelike conversational character, and to carry it on to the length of a whole chapter, is a highly respectable challenge to the best literary skill. Almost anybody could pass one or another of these tests, perhaps, but not many could pass all three—let the reader try it. There seems to us no reason whatever to suppose that Rabelais meant anything more than to show what he could do in elaborating the first whimsical fancy that came into his head; and when one sees what he did do, one feels that this explanation is competent, especially as the thing had been done before. Rabelais lifted the idea of the Limosin student and his jargon from another writer, merely developing it much more fully, and improving it to the utmost.

The same may be said of the catalogue of books in the library of St.-Victor, and also of the two succeeding episodes, the one of the suit between the lords Kiss-

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breech and Suckfist, and that of the academic debate between Thaumast and Panurge. We all know that fanciful and allegorical titles survive even yet, and while nowadays they are mostly borne by novels, poems and plays, it is but of yesterday that they were common to serious work. One may recall Mr. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* as well within the lifetime of most of us; and our earlier bibliographies are full of names like *The Mourner's Cordial against Excessive Sorrow*, and *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing, out of the Quiver of the Scriptures*. These fatuities have at all periods, probably, made about the same impression upon a detached and perspicacious mind; Rabelais no doubt was stirred to a mild derision of the unamiable and dogmatic temper that expresses itself in them, much as any but a strictly parochial intellect would now be. On the other hand, he would be quite as unlikely to tilt seriously against its impenetrable self-satisfaction, knowing that he would only break his lance to no purpose. His measure of mankind was too accurate for that. But the thought did unquestionably suggest a remarkably difficult literary exercise. To compose a hundred and forty-one burlesque titles of this order requires first-rate powers of invention, such as only a first-rate writer can supply; we think that even Thackeray, who had a decided gift for that sort of thing, might have had his hands full with the undertaking.

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It seems to us therefore that the satire is incidental and of secondary intent, and that the main consideration was the pleasure of giving free run to a powerful and fecund imagination.

Even more are we led to this view in the case of the two lords' suit before Pantagruel. True, the jargon of the law is a preposterous verbal quagmire. It is so today, and it was so in the sixteenth century; doubtless it will always be so. But a person of Rabelais's temperament does not make it an object of serious attack, even by force of ridicule; that is for the Juvenals and Swifts. He presses its turgid abracadabra into service as a literary property, with ridicule as an outcome, certainly, but only as a by-product, one may say, to an extraordinary literary achievement. Mark Twain once quoted this sentence written by a schoolchild, "The supercilious girl acted with vicissitude when the perennial time came," and remarked its curious plausibility; it seems to mean something, though actually it means nothing. Any of us can write a sentence more or less like that; some of us can carry its plausibility on to the length of a passable paragraph; but there are few who can carry it on to the length of three chapters, and no one that we know of but Rabelais—and here perhaps is the trade-mark of the very first order of genius—no one but Rabelais could carry it on to this length with such ease of mastery as to leave the final impression of unwearied powers and unexhausted

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resources. Within limits, a fair comparison may be found in the second movement of the double concerto of Bach. At the end of those stupendous contrapuntal intricacies, one is left with the sense amounting to certainty that Bach could keep them going just as long as one wished him to, without effort or exhaustion, and on the same level of unapproachable superiority; and that he only stopped when he did because he thought he had gone about far enough. Precisely this is the residual conviction that ensues upon reading the two lords' pleas, and the judgment of Pantagruel:

> 'Having seen, heard, calculated and well considered of the difference between the lords of Kissbreech and Suckfist; the court saith unto them that in regard of the sudden shivering of the flickermouse, bravely declining from the æstival solstice, to attempt by private means the surprisal of toyish trifles in those who are a little unwell for having taken a draught too much, through the lewd demeanour and vexation of the beetles that inhabit the diarodal climate of an hypocritical ape on horseback, bending a crossbow backwards. The plaintiff truly had just cause to caulk and stop the chinks of the galleon which the good woman blew up with wind, having one foot shod and the other bare, reimbursing and restoring to him, low and stiff in his conscience, as many bladder-nuts and wild pistaches as there is of hair on eighteen cows, with as much for the embroiderer, and so much for that. He is likewise declared innocent of the case privileged from the knapdardies, into the danger whereof it was thought he had incurred. . . . But in that he chargeth the defendant that he was a botcher, a cheese-eater and

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trimmer of man's flesh embalmed, which in the arsiversy swagfaltumble was not found true, as by the defendent was very well discussed.

'The court therefore doth condemn and amerce him in three porringers of curds, well cemented and closed together, shining like pearls and cod-pieced after the fashion of the country, to be paid unto the said defendent about the middle of August in May; but on the other part, the defendent shall be found to furnish him with hay and stubble for stopping the caltrops of his throat, troubled and impulregafixed with gabardines garbled shufflingly, and friends as before, without costs and for cause.'

All this, like Bach's concerto, is essentially so simple, it runs off so smoothly and forcefully, that to reproduce its general effect seems easy enough until one tries to do it. We shall not pause over the debate between Thaumast and Panurge, in the eighteenth and two succeeding chapters, longer than to say that most commentators find in it a motive of reflection upon the unsubstantial and hollow quality of mediæval scholastic disputation, both in content and method; and so may the reader if he sees fit. The thirteenth chapter contains a rare and delightful episode, that of the resurrection of Epistemon, "and of the news which he brought from the devils, and damned people in hell." In the war with the Dipsodes, Epistemon, one of Pantagruel's suite, had his head cut off by a flying shard of stone, but was brought to life again and finely healed by the ministrations of Panurge—

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only that he was somewhat hoarse for above three weeks together and had a dry cough, of which he could not be rid but by the force of continual drinking. And now he began to speak, and said that he had seen the devil, had spoken with Lucifer familiarly, and had been very merry in hell and in the Elysian fields; affirming very seriously before them all that the devils were boon companions and merry fellows: but in respect to the damned, he said he was very sorry that Panurge had so soon called him back into this world again: 'for,' said he, 'I took wonderful delight to see them.'

'How so?' said Pantagruel.

'Because they do not use them there,' said Epistemon, 'so badly as you think they do. Their estate and condition of living is but only changed after a very strange manner. For I saw Alexander the Great there, mending old stockings, whereby he got but a very poor living.

Xerxes was a crier of mustard.
Romulus, a salter and patcher of pattens.
Numa, a nailsmith.
Tarquin, a porter.'

—and so on, naming about a hundred of the great ones of the earth, who were reduced to various abject employments. Here again it is the literary ingenuity that could devise such an anomalous category, and not any supposed significance of recondite intention, which the reader will find most satisfactory to dwell upon. The same thing is true of similar categories that are found elsewhere, as in the description of Shrovetide by Xenomanes in the Fourth Book. Instead of looking for signs of a hidden meaning, the existence of which is

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highly doubtful, it is better to give oneself up to full and free delight in the enjoyment of that great literary fecundity, about which there can be no doubt; to imagine oneself called on to compose even one such category, in order the better to conceive of what a feat it is; and then to lose oneself in admiration of the genius that has composed so many, and that gives the sense of being able to keep on composing them indefinitely.

The reader is helped to a proper sense of proportion, too, by remembering always that Rabelais was not by occupation or even by primary interest, a writer. Writing took up a very small space in his life. He was busy with other affairs; his studies, his profession, his friends, the multiple interests of his associates and employers—these interests extending even to diplomacy, in which Rabelais occupied himself to some extent, as shown by his letters from Italy, which, by the way, in those portions of them which deal with public affairs, are models of diplomatic reporting. But a writer, in the accepted sense, he never was. He turned off the Second Book in an incredibly short time. No doubt, as we said, he was pleased by its instant popularity, but two years passed before he followed it up with the First Book, and then his pen lay idle on this popular topic for twelve years, when the Third Book appeared. Two years later he wrote eleven chapters of the Fourth Book, and the complete Fourth Book four years after

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On his fine Aldine Plato it reads, "and of his Christian friends."[1] If a great physician or an eminent priest did this even now, it would be at once seized upon as one of the beautiful little marks invariably revealing a nature lovable, gentle, generous, affectionate, sprightly. How much more, then, in the days when books were such a cherished and relatively rare possession! We believe that just this is the inscription to be written in his own book. His writings are not the property of the propagandist or the critic, but of himself first, and then of the uncontentious, humorous, and imaginative spirits who are most like him; they were written for "Francis Rabelais and his Christian friends" in all ages, and none else has any business with them.

V

Between 1532 and 1534, Rabelais lived a rather regular and uneventful life at Lyons, attending to his duties as head of the hospital, keeping up his studies and enlarging his acquaintance. He worked at odd times on his forthcoming *Gargantua*, and also published a little pamphlet called the *Pantagrueline Prognostication*, a precursor of the comic almanac, done in burlesque imitation of the astrologic forecasts contained in almanacs of the period. He put this out as

[1] "Fr. Rabelæsi καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ φίλων." ". . . καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ φίλων Χριστιανῶν."

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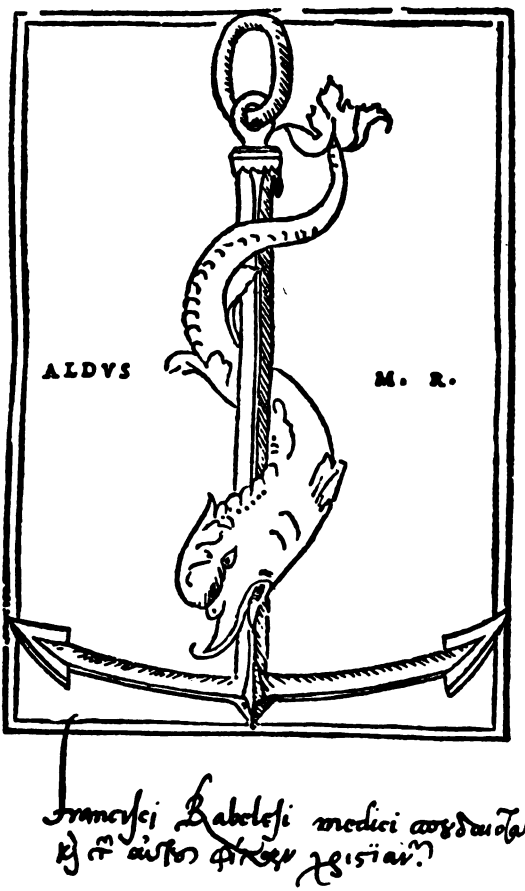
ΑΠΑΝΤΑ ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΟΣ.

OMNIA PLATONIS OPERA.



Title-page of an Aldine Plato belonging to Rabelais and inscribed by him.

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"composed by master Alcofribas, architriclin[1] of the said Pantagruel," and the publisher's name does not appear on the title-page. He turned out one of these humorous trifles each year for several years; there was hardly more than a day's work in any of them, but they all bear his unmistakable trade-mark, as, for example:

Ch. III. *Of the Diseases this Year.*

> This year the stone-blind shall see but little; the deaf shall hear but scurvily; the dumb shall not speak very plain; the rich shall be in somewhat better circumstances than the poor, and the healthy than the sick. Whole flocks, herds and droves of sheep, swine and oxen, cocks and hens, ducks and drakes, geese and ganders, shall perish; but the mortality shall not be altogether so great among apes, monkeys, baboons and dromedaries. As for old age, it will be incurable this year, on account of the years past. Those who are sick of the pleurisy will feel a plaguy stitch in their side; those who are troubled with the thorough-go-nimble, or wild-squirt, shall go often to the close-stool; . . . sore eyes will by no means help the sight.

Later he acknowledged authorship of these *facetiæ*, styling himself as "physician to the great hospital at Lyons," just as he was about to take French leave of his place—this was at the beginning of 1535—and also styles himself doctor of medicine, which he was not; he had only a bachelor's degree in medicine as yet, and did not proceed doctor until the spring of

[1] "Master of the feasts."

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1537. Whether there was at this time a loose popular use of the term *doctor*, as there is in some quarters today, is uncertain; perhaps the title was anticipated by courtesy in the case of those who would presently get it. Rather curiously, however, in an official document addressed to Rabelais by the pope in 1536, Paul III expressly says "[you] were promoted to the degrees of bachelor, licentiate and doctor"; doubtless a mere assumption. In his petition that called forth this papal brief, Rabelais says only that he had studied medicine and "taken in it the degrees required" of a practitioner; which seems a little disingenuous, since it does not appear that he attained the grade of licentiate until the following year. A bachelor's degree, then as now, enabled one to qualify for practice, but unless there is some mistake somewhere, it would seem that Rabelais misled Paul III by his use of the plural. If he had any motive for this, it is by no means clear; probably he had none, but merely anticipated the formality in his own mind as something of no great consequence, since his actual qualifications were all in hand and he was on the eve of taking both the advanced degrees.

Rabelais's life from 1532 to 1534, though marked by only one incident of large significance, was highly interesting and agreeable, chiefly through the spread of his acquaintance and associations with men of letters; in consequence of this, too, his reputation grew greatly. All the literary élite of France frequented Lyons and

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became his friends. He knew the fiery and turbulent "martyr of the Renaissance," Étienne Dolet, and later on fell out with him, too, for Dolet, as we shall see, printed an unauthorized issue of one of his books, which had serious consequences. Rabelais gained the friendly regard of Nicolas Bourbon, and of the poet-politician Saint-Gelais, who was highly influential both at the court of Francis I and in the church. His relations with Saint-Gelais seem intimate. He lifted bodily from Saint-Gelais the two enigmas in verse which appear one at each end of his *Gargantua;* and this he could hardly have done without the author's consent and approval. Saint-Gelais did not himself publish these verses for many years; the *Antidoted Conundrums* in 1547, and the *Prophetical Riddle* as late as 1574; so Rabelais must have got them from manuscript or from hearing them read; there are, in fact, differences between the version appearing in the *Gargantua* and the version published in Saint-Gelais's works.

These acquaintances and associations in the freemasonry of letters seem to have persisted very well against the inevitable changes that time and fortune bring. Five years after Rabelais's literary reputation was launched by the *Pantagruel,* years in which he had taken up many new interests and had journeyed as far as Rome, Rabelais attended a notable reunion at Paris. Dolet had got himself in serious trouble through

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a murder committed at Lyons, the king had pardoned him, and his old friends among the literati got up a banquet for him to celebrate the occasion.[1] One wishes one might have seen the assemblage. Budé, Rabelais, Clément Marot, and Nicolas Bourbon were there, and so were Bérauld, Visagier, Toussain, Dampierre, Voulté, Danés, and Salmon Macrin; it was a convocation of the gods.[2] No doubt there were many reminiscences of former meetings at Lyons, such as the one four years before which had brought Macrin and Rabelais together with Susanneau and others on the brilliant occasion when Francis I and all his court paid a visit to the city.[3]

[1] Dolet wrote some Latin hexameters on the banquet, mentioning among those present—

> Franciscus Rabelæsus, honos et gloria certa
> Artis Pæoniæ, qui vel de limine Ditis
> Extinctos revocare potest et reddere luci.

It is interesting to note that Dolet chooses to celebrate Rabelais on the side of his professional, rather than his literary reputation. One may not make too much of this, yet it is one slight indication among many, that Rabelais's professional reputation was very high.

[2] Charles Nodier observes with but little exaggeration that this period of French literature "is dominated by three great spirits which the ages of literature, ancient and modern, have hardly anything to match. They are those who have established the language of Montaigne and Amyot, the language of Molière, la Fontaine and Voltaire. . . . The first of these is Rabelais; the second, Clément Marot; and the third . . . is Bonaventure des Périers, and whatever way one looks at him, Bonaventure des Périers is not inferior to the other two."

[3] Table-talk at the banquet ran on the great figures of the Renaissance outside France. Dolet says,

> Hos inter multus sermo tum nascitur; oræ
> Externæ quid docti habeant scriptoris; Erasmus,
> Melancthon, Bembus, Sadoletus, Vida, Jacobus
> Sannazarus, plena laudantur voce vicissim.

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There had been changes in the fortunes of humanism since then, among them one irreparable calamity, the loss of its guiding spirit. The incomparable Erasmus of Rotterdam had died at Basel but a few months before. There had been also the "affair of the placards," with its violent reaction on humanism; a sudden change in the liberal policy of Francis I, a recrudescence of the ecclesiastical spirit of repression and persecution, all the fiercer because of having been kept some time on leash. Only a few more years were to pass, indeed, before Marot and Robert Estienne would be in exile, des Périers a refugee and suicide, and Dolet himself, the guest of honour at the banquet, would be hanged and burned for heresy, in the Place Maubert.

VI

But as we have said, in the two years between the Second Book and the First Book, 1532-1534, humanism at Lyons was in a comfortable way. We have already alluded, however, to one significant event in Rabelais's life there, which happened, without any immediate consequence, in 1533, when the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris—the faculty known as the Sorbonne—condemned and proscribed the anonymous *Pantagruel*. This incident in the history of censorship is worth notice, because it shows so well the spirit and temper that seems invariably to come out in the

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exercise of this repulsive activity. The story is told in a private letter by John Calvin, who was residing in Paris at the time.

The *Pantagruel* was condemned as obscene and injurious to morals, which was sheer dishonesty, as subsequent events proved. The Sorbonne at this period was a good deal under discredit. Its policies were not those of the court, and it could not depend on having its decrees enforced by the secular government. The king was on the side of the humanists, for the time being. In this matter of the censorship of books, moreover, Francis I had a crow to pick with the Sorbonne in a personal way. While proscribing the Second Book with some others on the general count of obscenity and immorality, the Sorbonne also proscribed the *Miroir de l' Âme Pécheresse*, a devotional book just out, written by no less a personage than the king's gifted sister, Marguerite of Navarre. Francis descended on the Sorbonne in some warmth to find out what was wrong with the book, and was told that nothing was wrong with it as far as the censors knew; they had not read it, but as it had not been submitted for the Sorbonne's approval before publication, they had proscribed it in a routine way, under the parliamentary decree of 1522, which provided that any work on religion must be so submitted and authorized. The Sorbonne had the law on its side, but this empty parade of authority was an unprofitable indiscretion. The other faculties of

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the University publicly repudiated the action of the Faculty of Theology; the censors read the *Miroir* and promptly lifted the ban; but nothing was done about the Second Book, or the others that had been proscribed with it, and they remained under condemnation.

This quite impotent gesture only enhanced the *Pantagruel's* popularity. The king no doubt had already had it read to him and enjoyed it; Francis I later gave Rabelais copyright on it and on the *Gargantua*, by royal warrant, as also did his successor, Henry II. Such of the court as ever read anything had doubtless read it; they could hardly have missed it. So neither Rabelais nor his readers had anything to fear from the Sorbonne; the reverend Faculty had made its decree, for whatever satisfaction might be got out of so doing, but enforcing the decree was another matter, so no one paid any attention to it.

This was in 1533. The next year the *Gargantua* came out—possibly, quite probably, the action of the Sorbonne hurried it up a little—and also a new edition of the proscribed Second Book. Rabelais took advantage of the new issue to make a few verbal changes by way of chaffing the Sorbonne. He added largely to the catalogue of books in the library of St.-Victor, inserting some particularly racy and pungent titles. Towards the end of the eighteenth chapter he inserts a number of anagrams on the word *Sorbonne*, making Thaumast say, " 'as for disputing contentiously, I will

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not do it, for it is too base a thing, and therefore leave it to those sottish sophisters, sorbillants, sorbonagres, sorbonigenes, sorbonicoles, sorboniforms, sorbonisecs, niborcisants, sorbonisants, saniborsants, who in their disputes do not search for the truth, but for contradiction only and debate.' " In the thirteenth chapter, where Epistemon mentions the various worthies that he had discovered in hell, he says he saw the Franc-Archer de Baignolet (the hero of one of Villon's poems, the type and literary pattern of a mercenary, drunken, bragging, and cowardly scoundrel) acting as inquisitor of heretics. " 'When he saw Perceforest making water against a wall on which was painted the fire of St. Anthony, he declared him a heretic and would have caused him to be burned alive, had it not been for Morgant, who for his proficiat and other small fees gave him nine tuns of beer.' " With the exception of one which occurs in the First Book, and which we shall notice later,[1] this is probably the most artistic and exquisite *riposte*

[1] On the whole, not to keep the reader out of a delicious thing too long, we may as well mention it here. It is the imbecile harangue made before Gargantua by the theologian of the Sorbonne, master Janotus de Bragmardo, to recover the great bells of Paris, which Gargantua had taken down and hung around his mare's neck. In particular we had in mind the superb pun (unavoidably lost in translation) which comes in where the sound of the French word *jument* (beast of burden) suggests by a kind of doddering association in the old man's weak mind, the verse of the Psalm XLIX, 12, which in the Vulgate reads, "Man, even when held in honour, hath no understanding; he is to be compared unto the dull-witted beasts of burden, and is made like unto them." So in speaking of the bells, he tells Gargantua that " 'if they fit your mare (*jument*) well, so they do our Faculty, *quæ comparata est jumentis insipientibus, et similis facta est eis.*' "

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against the Sorbonne to be found in the whole work. Even before the new issue of 1534, Rabelais had touched up the Sorbonne afresh. In the last reprint of 1533, which came out after the book was condemned, he gravely added to the title-page a statement that this edition had been "corrected anew by master J. Lunel, doctor of divinity." [1]

All this, however, was mere pleasantry. Rabelais knew well enough that the Sorbonne's superheated concern with the Second Book's obscenity and immorality was but a very shabby subterfuge. When in 1542 he undertook to clear the *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* of their objectionable passages, he did not strike out a single one of their alleged obscenities. He merely erased the more explicit animadversions against systematic theology and its professors; as where here or there the word *theologian* occurred in any obnoxious connotation, he substituted *sophist*. The words *sophist, sophistry, sophistical,* had long been in conventional use among the humanists, and were well understood; all the literati knew what they meant. The Sorbonne had no objection to what we should regard as a very profane literary treatment of sacred subjects. This was quite in the taste of the time; the church was quite

[1] There was a certain Vincenzo Lunel at Rome, the head of the Franciscan order, but this is perhaps a mere coincidence; still, it may have caused the name to come to Rabelais's mind at the moment. There was also a Jean Lunel, subsequently a titular bishop, whom Rabelais would not have been above lampooning in this playful way.

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used to having its clerks and its faithful indulge in parodies and crude jests on sacred texts, and in the secular reproduction of sacred scenes. On the other hand, the Faculty kept a sharp eye out for anything reflecting on the cult of the Virgin and the saints; also for anything critical of the church's practical mechanics, such as its monopoly of spiritual interpretation, its commerce in pardons and indulgences, its régime of fasts, penances, and pilgrimages. The First and Second Books passed muster easily on these counts; in 1542 Rabelais struck out only a couple of phrases that might by a great stretch of particularity have been construed unfavourably—in the sixth chapter of the First Book, a reference to the devotions to Ste. Marguerite by women in childbirth as *capharderie*, or mere cant, and in the seventeenth chapter, a volley of invocations of the saints, sent up by the drowning Parisians.[1] So it was only the affront to the official dignity of the Sorbonne and the personal dignity of its professors that really rankled; and for such an offence as this, one may easily understand that there could be neither composition nor forgiveness.

[1] Neither of these passages is in the English text, nor are the anagrams on the word *Sorbonne*.

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Chapter Five

ON 12 January, 1534, Rabelais entered a new field, the field of public affairs. His distinguished acquaintance Jean du Balley, bishop of Paris, was crossing France with all possible speed on his way from England to Italy to carry out a most grave and urgent diplomatic errand, one end of which lay in London and the other in Rome. Du Bellay picked up Rabelais at Lyons, to go with him as his personal physician. He needed one, as he was a very ill man, and the hardships of travel aggravated his condition severely. He suffered from sciatica; in a letter to de Castillon, written 8 February, he says he was "almost unable to endure being carried in a chair." Under the circumstances, this appointment was good incidental testimony to Rabelais's skill and reputation. Perhaps the appointment came on too short notice for Rabelais to arrange his responsibilities at the hospital, or there may have been formalities in the way of a leave of absence. For whatever reason, Rabelais seems to have left without much ceremony; a visit to Italy, the dream of every humanist, and especially a visit under such auspices,

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was worth any price. Rabelais's salary at the hospital was forty dollars a year,[1] which was pretty fair wages, a dollar being worth more then than now. On leaving Lyons, he collected about three-quarters of his salary for the preceding year, letting the balance go as indemnity to pay a substitute. To be precise, his salary was due on the thirty-first, and he drew on it about two weeks in advance. He drew twenty-seven dollars, and left a balance of eleven dollars and some cents, possibly having already had an advance of a dollar or so at some time in the year. He seems somehow to have come out a little ahead in the long run, so his sacrifice was more apparent than real. His place was held open for him, and the records of the hospital show that on 1 August he drew his pay for six-and-a-half months, which included the time he was away; and in some way he made it come to twenty-five dollars, so the records say. This is a great mystery; one thinks of Panurge and the money-changers. The thrifty French auditor of the hospital remarks plaintively in a note on the margin of the account that he had no right to so much, because "it would appear that the physician's salary is only forty livres" a year; and how the matter was managed as it was, must be left to free conjecture as part of the unfathomed "secret of Rabelais."

The diplomatic errand of du Bellay concerned the divorce of Henry VIII of England from his Spanish

[1] Forty livres; the livre being reckoned as about equivalent to a dollar.

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wife, Catherine of Aragon, aunt of Charles V of Spain. Francis I, beset by the "encirclement" policy of Charles, which we have described, needed to keep up every alliance he had and to get as many more as he could—and he made some strange ones; with Scotland, for instance, Sweden and Denmark, and even with the Ottoman Turks—and one of his most important alliances was with Henry. If he could keep England loyal to the Church of Rome, he could usefully play off Henry's orthodoxy against that of Charles in the whole purview of papal influence; and if he could keep Henry on his side in a political way, even to the extent of a "benevolent neutrality," he could make good use of him in his continuous trial of strength against the Spanish power. Henry had rather made a point of sending him some help after the sack of Rome by Charles's soldiers in 1527, which so shocked all Catholic Christendom. Charles was now bringing heavy pressure to bear on the pope to declare the sentence of excommunication against Henry for divorcing his aunt. Therefore Francis sent du Bellay first to England where he got Henry's promise not to break away from Rome arbitrarily, but to accept the pope's offer—if the pope should make one—of a chance to defend himself; and then to Rome, to get the pope to authorize the offer.

Henry was willing enough to be agreeable—political neutrality quite suited him—but he had fish of his own

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to fry; he had long had his eye on the church's valuable property-holdings in England, and he also thought very favourably of some day diverting into his own pocket the great leakage of money that flowed out of England to the court of Rome. He was in a pretty good position to be independent, and his orthodoxy might not have lasted long under any circumstances. But he agreed to Francis's proposal, and so did the pope, who was in a position of great difficulty, such difficulty that his life was probably shortened in consequence, for he died within six months.[1] Du Bellay's mission looked like a success, but the messenger sent from Rome to Henry to complete the arrangement did not return in time. Probably the story that he had encountered floods is true enough. Henry played fair; the messenger brought a full understanding and authorization; but meanwhile, only two days before his arrival, Clement VII had given way to the solicitations of Charles's ministers and promulgated the sentence of excommunication. Henry then broke with Rome, made his contemplated confiscations, and

[1] Henry wanted Clement VII to declare his marriage with Catherine null and void on grounds of church law, she having been Henry's sister-in-law, the widow of his older brother. This would have made everything smooth and easy, but there were two difficulties in the way. First, the attitude of Charles V, who threatened the pope with all sorts of reprisals; and second, Henry had married Catherine under a special dispensation from Julius II, and it would be rather a serious matter for one pope to reverse another, especially within so short a time, and in a case so notoriously devoid of plausibility.

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the state of things known as the English Reformation ensued.[1]

This ecclesiastical incident was but one thread among hundreds which for years had made up a diplomatic tangle so general and intricate that a description of it would be no less than a syllabus of comparative history covering all Western Europe. One must remember, however, that at this period actual religious conviction played as little a part in the conduct of public affairs as it does now. Those who have these affairs in charge, such as sovereigns in a monarchy or office-holders in a republic, have always at their disposal a large popular credit of inconsistency and dishonesty upon which they can draw to almost any extent in their pursuit of some economic or political advantage, without incurring opprobrium; indeed, when they do so, they more often than not gain in favour with the public. The statesman like Henry VIII, Charles V, or Francis I, uses this fund of credit without scruple, as best his intelligence directs. Designations of creed, sect, or conventicle are without substance in his view, and his assumption of them implies no obligation of

[1] Curiously, however—perhaps with the British talent for apparently irrelevant compromise—Henry did not turn Protestant. He broke only with the papal supremacy; all other points of Catholic doctrine he enforced most rigidly. Hence an anomalous state of affairs existed in England; on the one hand, Henry burned thousands of Protestants for disloyalty to Catholic doctrine; on the other, he beheaded wholesale devout and eminent Catholics, like Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and the great humanist Sir Thomas More, for loyalty to the pope! Probably nothing quite like this was ever seen in any country.

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conscience; for practical purposes he is Catholic or Protestant, Jew, Turk, infidel or heretic, as may suit the exigencies of any particular time and situation. Thus Francis I quite regularly gave surreptitious support, through his diplomatic agent Guillaume du Bellay, to Protestants in German principalities where Charles's influence could be weakened or impeded by it; for political purposes he quite regularly pursued a casual and easy policy towards Protestantism in France. In 1534, however, when he suspected that the political implications of Protestantism were being used to undermine the royal power, he suddenly became as orthodox as the Sorbonne itself: he became *très-grand justicier* who blew the fires of the Inquisition with all his might, and gave full sway to any excess of ignorance and fanaticism.

Humanism, represented by spirits like Erasmus and Rabelais, is the very opposite of all this. It is selfless, consistent, invariable, and the same for all mankind; it is disinterested, objective, with no personal or partisan ends to gain. Hence its contacts with friend and enemy alike are fortuitous and at its own risk, as Rabelais began to discover when in the autumn of 1534 the Sorbonne regained its lost ground of authority and the dragooning of opinion set in. Humanism found itself in its classic attitude of being out with both sides. The Protestants had taken the *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* as so much grist to their mill, and the anonymous

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author as a kindred spirit; and when they found him "throwing stones into their garden too," as Henri Estienne said in bitterness, they were disappointed and disgusted. Acrimony, cramping intolerance, spiritual usurpations, aggressions, and despotisms are to the humanist exactly the same thing at Geneva that they are at Rome or Paris, exactly the same thing when enforced by a Calvin as by a Julius II, by an Elizabeth as by a Torquemada. This is what remains forever incomprehensible to the reformer; if it were not so, there would be no reformers. He suddenly discovers that the humanist is of no use to him. Just when he is about to lean his heaviest on an Erasmus or a Rabelais, he finds that his support has unaccountably given way, or rather that it has disappeared, it is simply not there; and he is never able to know the reason why. He thinks this failure of the humanist is due to mere opportunism and cowardice, and as such he despises and condemns it. Yet, after all, it seems fair to ask why a man should be called on to make a martyr of himself for the sake of something that he does not believe in.

When Rabelais returned from his visit to Italy, in the summer of 1534, the humanists were still quite safe on the score of any supposititious associations with Protestantism. Since 1520, or since the time when Luther's works began to filter over into France, one or two Protestants had been burned for heresy at Paris

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and one near the Swiss border, but this was in consequence of overt acts; even so, the king was none too well pleased by it. But private opinion was let go unquestioned, and no one in authority tried to make too much of the heretical tendencies discoverable or imaginable in humanist writings. Several incidents of wanton iconoclasm, however, had aroused a great deal of public feeling both for and against the Protestants, and this irritated the authorities. Had the Protestants been content to accept a public policy not unlike that of Trajan with the Roman Christians, they would probably have been left undisturbed; but this was hardly to be expected. At all events, after the mutilation of some sacred images in 1528 at Paris, and again in 1530, the "affair of the placards" occurred 18 October, 1534. That morning found posted on various public buildings, including the royal palace, heretical theses of a coarse type, disparaging the Sacrament of the Mass and the adoration of the saints. This was too much. Francis had already been hearing from his cardinals that his tolerance was unfavourable to public order and likely to undermine the royal power; which was perhaps true enough in the circumstances, since the pinch of his fiscal and foreign policies, and of his personal extravagance, was beginning to be felt. So he abruptly changed his attitude, and the ensuing half-year was a period of wholesale blood-letting; and within a month of the "affair of the placards," the First

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Book—the *Inestimable Life of the Great Gargantua, Father of Pantagruel*—was published at Lyons.

Like the Second Book, it was published anonymously. The title-page says it was composed by "the Abstractor of the Quintessence," and that it is "a book full of pantagruelism." The title-page of a later issue calls it "the most horrific life of the great Gargantua," and ascribes its authorship to "master Alcofribas, abstractor of the quintessence." Quite probably Rabelais had been meditating over this book at odd moments during 1533, but the actual writing of it seems to have taken but a short time. Like the *Pantagruel*, it was perhaps spun off in two or three months; it might have been written in great part, even all of it might have been written, after his return from Italy. There is no information available concerning this, and one conjecture is about as good as another. It does not seem to us to argue any very great temerity on the part of Rabelais if we suppose it was published in the regular way at the November fair, after the "affair of the placards" instead of before it. The air at Lyons was much clearer than at Paris, and literary contraband was no great novelty; plenty of books that were distasteful to the Sorbonne were both published and imported by the booksellers there. Communications were slow, and it might easily have taken more than two weeks for the Lyons publishers to get the full import of the "affair of the placards." But chiefly, Rabelais had very

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powerful friends, such as the king's sister Marguerite, the du Bellays and d'Estissac, men who were bitterly opposed to the reactionary disposition of the Sorbonne, and who knew what France really needed. The Sorbonne, to a man, had been against Henry VIII's divorce, and had cramped and hindered Jean du Bellay's diplomatic errand at Rome by every influence that they could bring to bear on Clement VII; and this had further exasperated du Bellay and all those of his fellow-nobles who had the good of France sincerely at heart. The *Gargantua*, like the *Pantagruel*, contained nothing irreligious; its tendencies towards Protestantism were merely what any one might choose to read into it; and it is highly unlikely that Rabelais's friends would have seen him thrown to the dogs to save the morbid self-esteem of a handful of vindictive old men for whom they themselves had no good-will.

II

The *Gargantua* falls into the same three general divisions as the *Pantagruel*. The first fifteen chapters treat of the giant's family, his birth and childhood; the next nine describe his sojourn in Paris, where he was sent to be educated; and the rest of the book deals with his military exploits in the Picrocholine War. The book is more than a third again as long as the *Pantagruel*, and fully half of it is taken up with the

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great war that broke out when Gargantua's shepherds fell foul of the cake-bakers of Lerné. Friar John of the Funnels, the incomparable triumph of the art of character-construction, is introduced in much the same relation to Gargantua as Panurge bears to Pantagruel. The minor episodes are unlike those of the Second Book; some of them are borrowed from the *Chronicles* and much elaborated. For example, the story of Gargantua's taking down the great bells and hanging them on his mare's collar is in the *Chronicles*, but only as an incident, while Rabelais uses it to bring in the episode of the efforts made by the University of Paris to recover the bells; a long stretch of most fascinating raillery. At the end of the book, five chapters are taken up with a description of the abbey of Thélème, a brand-new kind of monastic establishment, full of startling innovations in principle as well as practice, which Gargantua proposed to build for Friar John as a reward for his distinguished services in the Picrocholine War.

Rabelais's delightful disregard of consistency appears at once. Whereas in the Second Book Gargantua lives in the legendary country of Utopia in far Cathay, in the First Book the seat of his family is abruptly shifted to Rabelais's native region of the Touraine. The entire First Book, except the nine chapters of Gargantua's stay in Paris, is staged within a stone's throw of Chinon, mostly on the Rabelais family property.

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Gargantua, in fact, was born on the family farm of la Devinière, like Rabelais himself. Gargantua was a huge giant; but there is nothing to show that his father Grangousier or his mother Gargamelle was anything over normal size. Rabelais seems to have been in such a hurry to get into the story, so impatient of any formality about it, that it simply slipped his mind to put in some identifying touch of gigantal prowess when he introduced Grangousier. Gargantua himself does not always remember to be a giant; it seems to be about all his creator's preoccupied mind can do to give us an occasional reminder of his proportions, while at other times contentedly letting him shrink to the measure of ordinary humanity. But when one has a great story to tell, one cannot be always thinking about consistency in incidentals. One remembers how in the twenty-third chapter of the Second Book, Rabelais translates Gargantua into the land of the fairies by the enchantments of Morgant, as had happened to King Arthur and Holger the Dane; yet in the thirty-fifth chapter of the Third Book he brings Gargantua in again for a moment or so, most casually and for no apparent reason, quite as if nothing of the sort had happened. Little matters of this kind—may his name be blessed for it!—did not worry Rabelais, even in the face of criticism. He had his literary detractors, who had already, on one ground or another, found fault with the Second Book. Just once, towards the end of

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the prologue to the First Book, does he refer to one of them, but only for an instant, and then he is back on his thought again in full cry, like a ranging dog that glances aside at something which has caught the bare edge of his attention, and then puts his nose to the scent again, and plunges on. When one's mind is full of rhapsodies on the flavour of fine food and the entrancing fragrance of good wine, one cannot possibly stop to flay a carping critic; one must get on with what one wants to say—

> In the composing of this masterly book, I never lost nor bestowed any more nor any other time than what was appointed to serve me for taking my bodily refection, that is, whilst I was eating and drinking. And indeed, that is the fittest and most proper hour wherein to write these high matters and deep sciences, as Homer knew very well, the paragon of all philologues, and Ennius, the father of the Latin poets, as Horace calls him, although a certain sneaking jobbernol objected that his verses savoured more of the wine than of the oil.
>
> A certain addle-pated coxcomb saith the same of my books, but a turd for him! The fragrant odour of the wine!—oh, how much more sparkling, warming, charming, celestial and delicious it is than of oil!

The First Book contains the regular properties of popular comedy and farce. We have mentioned the two long enigmas—the first is quite undecipherable, if indeed it ever had any meaning—with which the book begins and ends. The twenty-second chapter

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gives a list of the games that Gargantua played, one of those endless categories, or strings of titles, that no one now can see any fun in, but that were highly appreciated in their day; though one must still admire them as a pure *tour de force*. There are three trifles of versification in the thirteenth chapter, of a very ordinary type but having a distinctly popular turn. Another popular property was the play on words by equivocation, which Rabelais uses freely, and more brilliantly by far than his contemporaries or predecessors. The reason for pausing over these conventional appeals to the popular spirit, which to the modern taste seem dull enough, is that while Rabelais, too, dusted them around in his work as conventionally as any other author, he did so much better with them that occasionally he almost makes something out of them, even for us. For instance, in the chapter on the Qualities and Conditions of Panurge, in the Second Book, we found Panurge saying that there was but an antistrophe between a woman *folle à la messe* and *molle à la fesse;* and later, asking the fair lady of Paris to "'equivocate upon a *Beaumont le viconte.*' 'I cannot,' said she. 'It is,' said he, a '*beau con le vit monte.*'" For that order of thing, these would pass muster very well today. There are many instances of a good play on words in the First Book, as in the seventh chapter, where Grangousier hears the great cry of his newborn son, "the horrible noise which his son had made

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as he entered into the light of this world, when he cried out, 'Drink! drink! drink!'; whereupon he said, '*Que grand tu as et souple le gousier!*' that is to say, 'how great and nimble a throat thou hast!' which the company hearing said that verily the child ought to be called Gargantua, because it was the first word that after his birth his father had spoke." Usually, however, these plays on words cannot be conveniently indicated in an English version, and the translators had to give them up.

One most important element of Rabelais's humour, which shows as well in English as in the original—and his translators have accordingly made the most of it—is the element of surprise. He is continually taking his readers by surprise; whatever be the tone of his writing at the moment, whether learned or popular, serious or jocose, one is suddenly taken aback by some unforeseen, whimsical turn of thought or fancy which is invariably delightful, all the more because it compels one to ask oneself in amazement where in the world it came from, how he could ever have thought of it. One finds this element in many writers, but not on their every page. To do this kind of thing once in a while is probably easy enough for almost any writer of quality, but to keep doing it, and to make these odd and unexpected turns so extraordinarily apt, is another matter. For example, in the sixth chapter of the First Book, in a detailed clinical account of Gargantua's

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birth, written in the best professional style as probably no one but a practitioner could do, he says that owing to a drug administered by a midwife, certain sections of Gargamelle's digestive tract were "so oppilated, stopped, obstructed, and contracted that you could hardly have opened and enlarged them with your teeth, which is a terrible thing to think upon, seeing the devil at mass at St.-Martin's was puzzled with the like task when with his teeth he lengthened out the parchment whereon he wrote the tittle-tattle of two young mangy whores." Who could possibly have expected anything like that? Again, as a good humanist, Rabelais had as much distaste for the logic-chopping of the mediæval schoolmen as he had for the ecclesiolatry of the Sorbonne; and he ends the thirteenth chapter with a scintillant flash at the *doctor subtilis* whose metaphysics long competed with those of Thomas Aquinas, the great John Duns Scotus, which must have made the Faculty of Theology grind their teeth in utter rage. Gargantua, then five years old, had been explaining to his father at great length the merits of an important and marvellous discovery that he had made for the furtherance of his own personal comfort and cleanliness. "'Think not,'" he says, finally, "'that the felicity of the heroes and demi-gods in the Elysian field consisteth either in their asphodel, ambrosia or nectar, as our old women here used to say'"; no, it consisted only in their having anticipated him in this

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great discovery. There could be no doubt about it; all probability, all the weight of reasonable conjecture bore that way; "'and such,'" he added, "'is the opinion of master John of Scotland.'" Following Gargantua's reasoning through to the end, the reader will find this wholly unexpected appeal to authority coming on him like a fork of lightning.

Another interesting element of Rabelais's humour is his burlesque particularity and exactitude. Gargantua's trousers required "eleven hundred and five ells and a third, of white broad-cloth," and the chain around his neck weighed "twenty-five thousand and sixty-three marks of gold." In the seventh chapter, this element is combined with the one just mentioned—once more at the expense of Duns Scotus, by the way—in a sly manner that delights the heart. Gargantua had to be nursed on cow's milk, as no nurse could be found sufficient for him; "although there were not wanting some doctors of the opinion of Scotus, who affirmed that his own mother gave him suck, and that she could draw out of her breasts one thousand, four hundred and two pipes and nine pails of milk at every time: which indeed is not probable; and this point hath been found duggishly [1] scandalous and offensive to tender ears, for that it savoured a little of heresy." Nothing could be better; it is such incomparable turns of wit as

[1] Instead of "duggishly scandalous," Rabelais originally wrote "hath been declared by the Sorbonne to be scandalous," but changed it in the text from which the English version was made.

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this that make one take stock in the tradition propagated by Ventouillac, that Cardinal Jean du Bellay once "refused a learned individual of the day a seat at his table because he had not read The Book, for so Rabelais's singular narrative was called."

III

The First Book, between the account of Gargantua's childhood and the history of the Picrocholine War, contains a really remarkable allegorical treatise on education. One cannot possibly, we believe, say that Rabelais wrote it to promote a sound educational practice or to air his own views of what a sound practice should be. Still, as a humanist, he was much interested in education, and it was something about which he could write interestingly; he had not said much about it in the *Pantagruel,* and now that he had Gargantua on his hands as another growing child, in another book built on the exact structural model of the *Pantagruel,* a rather detailed view of the lad's schooling would be a good differentiating episode. It would tend against monotony and repetitiousness, and give him something new and lively to talk about.

After Gargantua's wonderful understanding became known to his father by his aptitude for what is now called in academic circles "experimental research," of a highly practical kind, and by the powers of free and

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exalted imagination that he brought to bear on this pursuit, Grangousier decided that his formal education must begin at once. Indeed, when Grangousier heard the little giant at the age of five construct off-hand an air-tight logical syllogism in perfect form, as recounted in the thirteenth chapter, he was ravished with pride and ambition. "'O my pretty little waggish boy,' said Grangousier, 'what an excellent wit thou hast! I will make thee very shortly proceed doctor in the *belles lettres*, by God, for thou hast more wit than age.'" Rabelais originally wrote "doctor of the Sorbonne"; and certainly no doctor of the University of Paris, whether of the *belles lettres*, theology, law, or medicine, could have picked a flaw in Gargantua's syllogism or constructed a better one. So he must begin at once his training in order to realize upon his precocity as soon as possible.

He began under the old system with a theologian of repute. "Presently they appointed him a great sophister-doctor called master Tubal Holophernes, who taught him his abc so well that he could say it by heart backwards; and about this he was five years and three months." He made similarly slow progress through an elementary Latin grammar, some moral treatises, a work which proved the falseness of pagan mythology and the truth of Christian tradition; with various other text-books of approved character and in current use. After many years of all this, his education was inter-

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rupted by a sad event with which, one may notice, Rabelais once again surprises the reader after his inimitable fashion:

> After that was read to him the book *De Modis Significandi,* with the commentaries of Hurtbise, of Fasquin, . . . and a rabble of others; and herein he spent more than eighteen years and eleven months, and was so well versed therein that to try masteries in school-disputes with his condisciples, he would recite it by heart backwards; and did sometimes prove on his fingers' ends to his mother, that *de modis significandi non erat scientia.* Then was read to him the Compost, on which he spent sixteen years and two months. And at that very time, which was in the year 1420, his said Præcepter died of the pox.

Then he got "an old coughing fellow to teach him, named master Jobelin Bridé," who kept on in the traditional method; but he did not do well. "At the last his father perceived that indeed he studied hard, and that although he spent all his time therein, yet for all that he did profit nothing; but, which is worse, grew thereby a fool, a sot, a dolt, and blockhead." Grangousier finally became convinced that it was better for his son "to learn nothing at all than to be taught such-like books under such schoolmasters." A friend of Grangousier, Don Philip of Marais, told him that something must be wrong with the system; that the proof of the pudding was in the eating, and that he would like to show him a sample product of the new method. Don

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Philip then brought in one of his pages, called Eudemon, and put him through his paces before Grangousier with such success that Gargantua was dissolved in tears of shame and envy, and Grangousier immediately dismissed master Jobelin, and arranged that Ponocrates, Eudemon's tutor, should take Gargantua to Paris and try to make something of him.

The twenty-first and twenty-second chapters show Ponocrates telling Gargantua to go through a day exactly as he had been accustomed to do under the old method, "to the end it might be understood by what means in so long time his old masters had made him such a sot and puppy." It was a day of late rising, slovenliness, drinking, and heavy eating, with no exercise. "He combed his head with a comb *de almain*, which is the four fingers and the thumb, for his preceptors had said that to comb himself otherways, to wash and make himself neat, was to lose time in this world." His matutinal gorgings and guzzlings were interrupted only by church-going, where after breakfast "he heard six-and-twenty or thirty masses"; and where he went over his beads and paternosters with his chaplain, who was "muffled up about the chin, round as a hoop, and his breath pretty well antidoted with the vine-tree syrup." It was at this period in the day that his studies came in, but they were not onerous. "Then did he study some paltry half-hour with his eyes fixed upon his book; but, as the comedy has it, 'his mind was in

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the kitchen.' Pissing then a whole potful, he sat down at table," where he ate dinner, leaving off only "when his belly was like to crack for fulness. As for his drinking, he had in that neither end nor rule; for he was wont to say that the limits and bounds of drinking were that a man might drink till the cork of his shoes swells up half a foot high." After dinner, "with a starched phiz mumbling over some scraps of a scurvy grace," he sat in to play innumerable games, all of them sedentary; then "it was thought fit to drink a little," and then a nap; then more paternosters, supper, a convivial evening with his retainers or with "the wenches thereabouts," and then "to sleep without control till eight o'clock the next morning."

Such was the educational discipline of the schoolmaster-theologian, the "sophister-doctor," that had brought Gargantua to his present plight. The twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters show the system that Ponocrates substituted for it, after Gargantua had been taken to "a learned physician of that time, called master Theodore," and canonically purged with Anticyrian hellebore, to cleanse "all that foulness and perverse habit of his brain." Ponocrates's system is worth attention in view of its not infrequent correspondences with modern educational practice; particularly in its attention to outdoor games and sports of physical exercise and skill, also in some of its dietary regulations. "His dinner was sober and thrifty, for then he did

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eat only to prevent the gnawings of his stomach, but his supper was copious and large, for he took then as much as was fit to maintain and nourish him; which indeed is the true diet prescribed by the art of good and sound physic, although a rabble of loggerheaded physicians nuzzled in the brabbling shop of sophisters, counsel the contrary." One observes with amusement that Gargantua and his companions did not bathe after their exercise, though "they did sweat all over their body." They were only "very well wiped and rubbed," and "shifted their shirts." We commonly think of the Middle Ages as the heyday of the Great Unwashed, but this is an error; it was in the Renaissance period that people of all classes began to neglect bathing. There is an interesting anticipation of our modern manual training and "shop practice" in the twenty-fourth chapter. Another modern feature is the stimulation of interest in the theory of things by observation of their phenomena; Gargantua "passing through certain meadows or other grassy places, beheld the trees and plants, comparing them with what is written of them in the books of the ancients." Readers will recall that their old friend Mr. Squeers of Dotheboys Hall made this exercise—somewhat modified—a feature of his interesting pedagogy.

Most modern of all, probably, in the system of Ponocrates, is the place which it makes for religion in education. There is no routine of paternosters and

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beads, no stated formality of six-and-twenty or thirty daily masses. The ritual of religious aspiration arises spontaneously out of experience. After a profitable day, not one hour of which has been lost or misemployed, a day spent in buoyant health, in the happiness of physical and spiritual well-being, in intimate examination of the wonderful works of his adorable Creator, "then with his master did he briefly recapitulate, after the manner of the Pythagoreans, that which he had read, seen, learned, done and understood, in the whole course of that day. Then prayed they unto God the Creator, in falling down before him and strengthening their faith towards him and glorifying him for his boundless bounty; and giving thanks to him for the time that was passed, they recommended themselves to his divine clemency for the future."

In fact, there are few sound modern improvements in pedagogy, as far as we know, that were not to some extent anticipated by Ponocrates. Critics have remarked with disfavour that his system addresses itself too much to the memory, that its intellectual exercise is disproportionately an exercise of memory. This is quite true; but it must be borne in mind that in the absence of printing, memory had then a much larger function to perform than it has now. In the fourteenth chapter it is expressly stated that Gargantua "wrote all his books, for the art of printing was not then in use." One had but one's bare manuscript text

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and commentary; there were available very few of the innumerable handy *aide-mémoires*, indexes, dictionaries, and such-like mechanical devices that now substitute themselves for memory. We are of course speaking of general memory. Special departments of memory—local memory, verbal memory, memory for name or number—are perhaps as highly developed now as they ever were; but general memory is not, nor does there seem to be any need that it should be.

With excellent literary art, immediately before the account of Gargantua's miseducation under the "great sophister-doctor," master Tubal Holophernes, Rabelais interpolates the superb, the speaking portrait of the typical sophister-doctor himself in all his pomp and glory, the representative and delegate of the Faculty of Theology, master Janotus de Bragmardo, whose addled head is stuffed with a dead and disintegrated débris of mediæval scholasticism. Devoid of experience, incapable of reason or judgment, the product of cloisterdom very far gone in senility, he has been sent as "the oldest and most sufficient of the Faculty unto Gargantua, to signify to him the great and horrible prejudice they sustained by the want of those bells" which Gargantua had lifted out of the bell-tower and hung around his mare's neck. "Master Janotus, with his hair cut round as a dish, his liripoop on his head after the old fashion, . . . driving before him three red-muzzled beadles," and convoyed astern

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by five or six masters of arts, betook himself to Gargantua's lodgings, and there made a set speech which is reported verbatim in the nineteenth chapter. The English-speaking reader finds this harangue somewhat puzzling; it is hard to understand without more explanation than we have here the space to make. But its bad macaronic Latin, its puerile rambling, its interruption by coughs uttered for effect, are plain enough. By all the evidence of the time, this speech is but little exaggerated; its pompous platitudes covering mediocrity of thought, its pretentious quotations, its absurd logic, can be duplicated almost perfectly from the serious academic literature of the period; even the coughing can be duplicated—one of the celebrated preachers of the day used to mark on the margin of his manuscript the places where he should cough.

As for logic, M. Plattard quotes from du Boulay a syllogism which is a first-rate match for the one constructed by master Janotus. It occurs in a harangue on the project of establishing a university at Issoire, a town in the Auvergne, about the geographical centre of France. "The town of Issoire is *quasi in centro*," said the orator. "The philosopher tells us that *centrum se habet ad suas circumferentias*. Hence Issoire and the Auvergne *qui est in centro* has access *suis circumferentiis*," which showed that a university should be established there.

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IV

When Rabelais went over to visit his "cow-country" in the autumn of 1532, "to know if any of my kindred there be alive" in the region round Chinon, he undoubtedly heard news of a long-standing family quarrel. Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe, a man of considerable local and some national importance, and a large landed proprietor, had constructed a fish-weir in the river Loire, which interfered with navigation and also infringed on Antoine Rabelais's fishing-rights; the Rabelais's "noble" estate of Chavigny lay next the principal property of the Sainte-Marthe family. Sainte-Marthe also had a water-mill; and the Loire having no great volume, what with the mill and the weir he pretty well held squatter sovereignty over the whole stream. The rivermen and boatmen got together and instituted proceedings against Sainte-Marthe, with Antoine Rabelais representing them, he being at this time the foremost lawyer in the region. Sainte-Marthe managed to stand them off ten years or so, but in the end had to give way.

There was a sharp crisis in this affair in the month of September, 1532, just when Francis Rabelais came over from Lyons for his visit. It would be naturally uppermost in everyone's mind and mouth, as an event of the first magnitude in a quiet rural bailiwick, so no

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doubt he got every item of its history and every shade of opinion about it. His own family would have a good deal to say. Aside from the actual loss and inconvenience caused by Sainte-Marthe's encroachments —which was a serious matter enough, and one of a kind which the French nature seems especially strong to resent—there was another factor involved. This was the petty rivalry peculiar the world over to neighbouring bourgeois families who have come up in the world. It is a most interesting thing to see today the surviving evidences of this rivalry in the sumptuous Renaissance residences built by the wealthy in the typical bourgeois city of Toulouse; one prosperous merchant after another would build a house to take the shine out of the last one, just as took place on Fifth Avenue in the 'nineties, when the mighty irruption of crude Western money broke upon New York. The Rabelais family and the Sainte-Marthes were the local moguls about Chinon. The Sainte-Marthes had somewhat the "jump" on the Rabelaises; they had started earlier and gone farther, but the Rabelaises were on their way and were worth watching. So on all accounts the feeling was strong, and when Francis Rabelais arrived it was in one of its recurrent periods of exacerbation. One may imagine how indulgently the accomplished and experienced man of the world regarded all this egregious concern with trivialities, and how immensely diverting his lively curiosity found it.

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He recalled it for literary purposes later on. He set the *Gargantua* in the Touraine rather than in the *Pantagruel's* mythical land of Cathay, because the Touraine was easier to write about—he knew the Touraine much better than he knew Cathay—and as long as his characters and story were interesting, who should care where they were set? He used actual names of places, because there they were—Chinon, Lerné, Seuilly, the rock Clermault, the ford of Vede, Cinais, and many others—all his readers would know them, for the Touraine was a sort of summer capital for the royal court. In the Second Book, he had Pantagruel engaged in a war between mythical peoples, the Dipsodes and Amaurots, which answered very well, but mythical properties are hard to manage, and it would be harder still to avoid monotony if one used a similar setting to stage the military exploits of Gargantua. Here, in this fine family row over Sainte-Marthe's fish-weir, involving as it did the whole carrying-trade of the Loire boatmen, and raising no end of local excitement, was just the thing he needed. Dress it up a little, not too particularly, and one could weave a capital story around it. If one could not think up enough fanciful names at the moment, and had to sift in a few names of real people living in the district, it would be no great harm; probably Rabelais thought it unlikely that he would ever again be strolling along the "broad highway" over which the truculent cake-

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bakers of Lerné were passing towards Chinon when they were accosted by Grangousier's shepherds, so why should he care? One could do anything one liked with such a stage-setting as this; one could let one's fancy have free range and get up all kinds of fine effects out of it.

So Rabelais stages a tremendous war in this miniature theatre of about six miles' breadth over all. The war breaks out in the twenty-fifth chapter with a quarrel between the cake-bakers, whose king is named Picrochole (Bitterbile) and the shepherds, the subjects of Grangousier.[1] Picrochole declared war on Grangousier; the proportions of the engagement may be seen from the muster of his forces. "My lord Shagrag was appointed to command the vanguard, wherein were numbered sixteen thousand and fourteen arque-busiers, together with thirty thousand and eleven volunteers. The great Touquedillon, master of the horse, had the charge of the ordnance, wherein were reckoned nine hundred and fourteen of brass, in cannons, double cannons, basilisks, serpentines, culverins, bombards, falcons, passevalans, spirales, and other sorts of great guns. The rear guard was committed to the duke of Scrapegood. In the main battle was the king and the princes

[1] Picrochole was of course immediately taken in local circles to be (as he no doubt was) a sort of caricature of Sainte-Marthe, and Grangousier was taken to represent Rabelais's father; and the whole episode was supposed to have an animus. We shall later recount an incident showing how strong the Ste.-Marthe family's grudge against Rabelais was, and how long it persisted.

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of his kingdom"—and so on. Picrochole's forces alone could hardly find standing room between Lerné and Chinon.

Picrochole was the type of king who expressed the idea of rulership then prevalent in Europe, and generally prevalent still; the idea that a nation should prosper at other nations' expense. In the thirty-third chapter, this idea is superbly worked out. Picrochole's cabinet outline to him a most extravagant programme of conquest. After he has finished up Grangousier, he is to push on and overrun all the kingdoms of the earth. The Duke of Smalltrash, the Earl Swashbuckler, and Captain Durtaille expound the classical doctrine that it is easier to get money with the sword than with the shovel—the economic motive of all war. One part of the army "'shall fall upon Grangousier and his forces; by it shall he be easily, at the very first shock, routed, and then shall you get money by heaps; for the clown has store of ready coin.'" Meanwhile the other part of the army shall set out on its career of progressive freebooting.

Grangousier, on the other hand, was the type of king dear to the humanists—especially to the French humanists, who saw the resources of the country being wasted at such a frightful rate by the military enterprises and personal extravagances of Francis I—the king who lived without exorbitance or ostentation, who "after supper warmeth his ballocks by a good, clear,

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great fire, and whilst his chestnuts are a-roasting, is very serious in drawing scratches on the hearth with a stick burned at one end, wherewith they did stir up the fire, telling to his wife and the rest of the family pleasant old stories and tales of former times." He is a pleasing figure; he believes in the national policy of pacific self-development. He makes Picrochole the most generous offers of composition, but in vain. Picrochole descends on him, and the good old man reluctantly, even tearfully, prepares to defend his people; and he at once summons Gargantua back from Paris to do his princely duty in the emergency. The forces of Picrochole are routed and overcome, chiefly by the prowess of Gargantua, with some fortuitous aid from his grey mare; and Grangousier deals most generously with the vanquished.

The war is described in considerable detail. It would be interesting to ascertain how much Rabelais really knew of the military science of his period, and how correctly he uses his terms; but we do not know that the Picrocholine War, or the many military terms employed in the prologue to the Third Book, have ever been scrutinized by a competent tactician who was at the same time thoroughly versed in the history of war and tactics. This may have been done, but if so, we have missed it; all the observations on the subject that we have seen are not those of professional soldiers of this type.

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V

At the outset of the war, Picrochole's soldiery made a great foray. They marched a third of the way from Lerné towards Chinon, almost up to la Devinière, the residence of Grangousier; in reality about three miles. "So far they went, pillaging and stealing, that at last they came to Seuilly, where they robbed both men and women, and took all they could catch; nothing was either too hot or too heavy for them." Having ransacked the town, they came to the abbey of Seuilly (where Rabelais is supposed to have got the rudiments of his education) and finding it barred against them, the main body marched on towards the ford of Vede, leaving seven companies of infantry and three hundred lancers, who broke down the walls of the abbey's vineyard, and began to help themselves to grapes. The monks did not know what to do in this emergency but to betake themselves to prayer; so "it was decreed that they should make a fair procession, stuffed with good lectures, prayers and litanies against the wiles of the enemy, and jolly intercessions for peace."

Friar John of the Funnels inhabited the abbey at this time, "a right monk, if ever there were any since the monking world monked a monkery"; we have quoted the description of him in our preface. He heard the unusual commotion in the vineyard, and going out

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there he perceived the enemy "cutting and gathering the grapes whereon was grounded the foundation of their next year's wine." Coming back to see what was going to be done about it, he found the monks at their devotions, chanting the *Impetum inimicorum ne timueritis* in a quavering chorus. This was too much. He interrupted the exercises with a sarcastic and able-bodied speech. It was no time for psalm-singing. "'By the virtue of God, why do you not sing—

"Grape-baskets, farewell! the vintage is done"?

The devil snatch me if they be not already within the middle of our close, and cut so well both vine and grapes that, by cod's body, there will not be found for four years to come so much as a gleaning in it! By the belly of St. James, what shall we poor devils drink the while? . . . Hark you, my masters, you that love the wine, cop's body, follow me, for Saint Anthony burn me as freely as a faggot, if they taste one drop of the liquor that will not now come and fight in defence of the vine!'"

So saying, he took his staff, "which was made of the heart of a sorb-apple tree," sallied out into the vineyard and went through Picrochole's marauders from end to end and back again. Taken by surprise, "out of array and all in disorder," and laden with their stealings, they were unable to organize resistance before Friar John was upon them, dealing out frightful car-

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nage, "and so thumped, mauled and belaboured them everywhere that never was corn so thick-and-threefold threshed by ploughmen's flails as were the pitifully disjointed members of their mangled bodies under the merciless baton of the cross." Thus Friar John saved the next year's wine-crop, and "by his prowess and valour were discomfited all those of the army that entered into the close of the abbey, unto the number of thirteen thousand, six hundred, twenty and two, besides the women and little children."

Hearing of this great achievement, Gargantua sent for Friar John, and the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters are devoted to showing what manner of man he was in conversation and companionship. Energetic, boisterous, ribald, a mighty eater and drinker, having "a paved stomach as hollow as St. Benêt's boots, always open like a lawyer's pouch," punctuating his conversation with abundant oaths and robust indecencies, ignorant of all books except his breviary which he misquotes and misapplies, and knowing no Latin but kitchen-Latin. He utters the scandalous *Venite apotemus*, hardly aware, no doubt, whether he is repeating the burlesque or the original. "'This wine is none of the worst,'" he says in his table-chatter with Gargantua. "'What wine drank you at Paris? I give myself to the devil if I did not once keep open house at Paris for all comers six months together. Do you know Friar Claude of the High Kilderkins? Oh, the good fellow

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that he is! but what fly hath stung him of late, he is become so hard a student? For my part, I study not at all. In our abbey we never study, for fear of the mumps. Our late abbot was wont to say that it is a monstrous thing to see a learned monk.'" The devotional life does not interest him, and he does as little with it as he can. "'I never sleep soundly but when I am at sermon or prayers,'" he tells Gargantua, who has been complaining of insomnia. "'Let us therefore begin, you and I, the seven penitential psalms, to try whether you shall not quickly fall asleep.'" On the other hand, he is always busy and highly practical. "'Whilst we are dispatching our matins and anniversaries in the choir, I make withal some cross-bow strings, polish glass bottles and boults, I twist lines and weave purse-nets wherein to catch conies. I am never idle.'" He is a mighty hunter, but does not like still-hunting, "'for I catch such cold that I am like to founder myself at that sport. If I do not run, toil, travel and trot about, I am not at my ease.'" He is the bravest of the brave; in all his subsequent lurid career in company of Gargantua and Pantagruel, he never shows the white feather. "'If I had been in the time of Jesus Christ, I would have kept him from being taken by the Jews in the garden of Olivet, and the devil fail me if I should have failed to cut off the hams of these gentlemen apostles who ran away so basely after they had so well supped, and left their good master in the

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Friar John of the Funnels

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lurch. I hate that man worse than poison that offers to run away when he should fight and lay stoutly about him. Oh, that I were but king of France for fourscore or a hundred years! by God, I should whip like cur-tailed dogs those runaways of Pavia. A plague take them, why did they not rather choose to die there than to leave their good prince in that pinch and necessity?'" A noble figure, an immense support to one's faith in the essential excellence of human nature, is Friar John of the Funnels. "'Every man desireth to have him in his company,'" said Gargantua, in his praise, "'. . . . he is an honest heart, a plain resolute good fellow; he travails, he labours, he defends the oppressed, comforts the afflicted, helps the needy, and keeps the close of the abbey.'"

VI

When the war was over, Grangousier dealt bountifully with his lieutenants, dividing his various properties among them. All these properties were places actually in the district, and all probably actual possessions of Rabelais's father—most of them were, at any rate—Coudray, Quinquenais, Gravot, la Roche-Clermault, Ligré, and so on. When it came Friar John's turn to be provided for, Grangousier proposed to make him abbot of Seuilly or of Bourgeuil or Saint-Florent, but he declined. "'How shall I be able,'" he asks—

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hear it, all ye sovereigns, presidents, princes, and rulers of the earth!—" 'how shall I be able to rule over others, that have not power and command over myself?' " However, he said, " 'if you think I have done you, or may hereafter do you, any acceptable service, give me leave to found an abbey after my own mind and fancy.' "

Then follows a literary composition hardly to be surpassed, an entrancing picture of the humanist's dream of human society existing in a state of absolute freedom; with economic freedom as a foundation, and with political and social freedom erecting themselves naturally and inevitably upon it. The abbey of Thélème is a portrayal of all that human society might be if only human beings were free to become as good, kind, enlightened, gentle, generous, as they know they can be, and really wish to be. There was no discipline in the abbey but such as was self-imposed; every arrangement was based upon individual responsibility—needless to say, therefore, the reverse of actual practice then or now, which leaves but little scope for individual responsibility. There was not even so much as a bell or a clock in the abbey, for one's time was to be disposed of by individual judgment, "according to the opportunities and incident occasions," and not by an arbitrary routine or schedule of hours. There can be, said Gargantua, " 'no greater dotage in the world than for one to guide and direct his courses by the sound of

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a bell, and not by his own judgment and discretion.' " The lover of freedom, the disbeliever in a dull and vicious mechanization and standardization of society, with its consequent deformation of the human spirit, its debasement and vulgarization of life's abiding values, will nowhere find a more abundant consolation and encouragement than in this vision of the humanists. Nowhere, we believe, is there a more elevated, convincing, and wholly sound conception of human nature's possibilities when invested with no more than mere freedom—only that—than in the fifty-seventh chapter, which expounds the discipline of the Thelemites:

> In all their rule and strictest tie of their order, there was but this one clause to be observed:
>
> DO WHAT THOU WILT
>
> Because men that are free, well-born, well-bred and conversant in honest companies, have naturally an instinct and spur that prompteth them unto virtuous actions and withdraws them from vice, called *honour*. Those same men, when by base subjection and restraint they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition by which they formerly were inclined to virtue, to shake off that bond of servitude wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable to the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us.

One does not pass from years at Fontenay to years at Maillezais without learning something of the en-

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nobling power of freedom. One does not experience the dwarfing intellectual regimentation of the monastery, one does not encounter the intense bourgeois passion for enforcing conformity through convention and formalizing conduct through law, one does not contemplate in turn the French nobleman of the Renaissance, freest of men on his self-contained rural domain, without incurring impressive and thought-provoking comparisons. The reader will perceive at once how far from any fundamental cynicism Francis Rabelais was, how penetrating his insight into the springs of human action, and how clear his perception of the basic conditions necessary to such development of the human spirit as he believed to be natural and normal. He knew men by observation, as he knew the birds and the trees; that is, he knew them as they actually were, and not as some *a priori* dogma of lawyers, theologians, or sociologists had laid it down that they must be. He was on the side of the return to Nature, and those who were most repugnant to him were the enemies of Nature. There is a superb allegory in the thirty-second chapter of the Fourth Book, that furnishes the key to Rabelais's estimate of the infatuate taxonomist, whether found in law, medicine, natural science, sociology, or the church, whether Catholic or Calvinist. One thinks of it at once whenever one reads of the doings of our modern legislators, mass-moralizers, dogmatists,

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and ecclesiolaters, and their efforts to recommend themselves and their ways to popular suffrage:

> Physis, that is to say Nature, at her first burthen begot Beauty and Harmony without carnal copulation, being of herself very fruitful and prolific. Antiphysis, who ever was the counterpart of Nature, immediately out of a malicious spite against her for beautiful and honourable productions, in opposition begot Amodunt and Dissonance by copulation with Tellumon. Their heads were round like a football, and not gently flatted on both sides like the common shape of man. Their ears stood pricked up like those of asses; their eyes, as hard as those of crabs, and without brows, stared out of their heads, fixed on bones like those of our heels; their feet were round like tennis-balls; their arms and hands turned backwards towards the shoulders; and they walked on their heads, continually turning round like a ball, topsy-turvy, heels over head.
>
> Yet (as you know that apes esteem their young the handsomest in the world) Antiphysis extolled her offspring, and strove to prove that their shape was handsomer and neater than that of the children of Physis; saying that thus to have spherical heads and feet, and walk in a circular manner, wheeling round, had something in it of the perfection of the divine power, which makes all beings eternally turn in that fashion; and that to have our feet uppermost and the head below them was to imitate the Creator of the Universe, the hair being like the roots, and the legs like the branches of man; for trees are better planted by their roots than they could be by their branches. . . . Thus . . . she drew all the witless herd and mob of fools into her opinion, and was admired by all brainless and nonsensical people.

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Chapter Six

AT SOME time in the month of January, 1535, Antoine Rabelais died, and his property was divided among the members of his family. The name of Francis Rabelais does not appear in the settlement, because being a monk, he was civilly dead and could inherit nothing. Four years later there was a redistribution of the property, possibly due to his transference from the "regular" to the secular priesthood, and the consequent re-establishment of his civil rights. It is known that the transfer took place, that his civil rights would be restored automatically in consequence, and there is no other reason apparent why the settlement of 1535 should have been disturbed. In this period, Rabelais went to a great deal of trouble to get his ecclesiastical relations cleared up and officially settled beyond cavil or question. Paul III, in a very flattering brief, absolved him from his "apostasy," which was no more than an irregularity, in appearing at Montpellier in the guise of a secular priest, and gave him permission to connect himself with any institution of the Benedictine order that he might choose; he gave

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him also the right to practice medicine. Rabelais chose the abbey of St.-Maur-les-Fossés, where he became, for a very short time, a canon. This abbey, which belonged to du Bellay, had been secularized by a bull of Clement VII in 1533, but the secularization was not carried out for three years; and when the chapter was finally installed in 1536, "François Rabelais, docteur en médicine" is named on the list of nine canons. A year later, his name is no longer on the list; quite probably he did not enjoy his new office and its emoluments more than six months. He seems, in fact, to have been much more interested in getting the office, and being known to have got it, than in keeping it. Curiously, he had hardly taken his seat before he memorialized Paul III a second time, rehearsing the circumstances of his entrance into the abbey of St.-Maur, and petitioning for a special confirmation of his canonship.

Various reasons have been assigned for this, most of them having to do with his relations with du Bellay and the politics of the period. What impresses us most, however, is this matter of the restoration of his civil rights. In a letter to d'Estissac from Rome, on the subject of his regularization, he remarks that there are two ways of routing his petition to the pope, one through the Chamber and one through the Court of Contradicts; and he says, it seems to us significantly, that a decision of the Court "cannot be revokable in France," while transactions of the Chamber "may be

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called into question, and proceedings re-opened." It is interesting to remark the abrupt transition from this extreme solicitude for safeguarding every detail of his regularization and secularization before the fact, to his customary attitude of rather easy-going indifference after the fact. Once seated as canon of the secularized abbey of St.-Maur, his status as a secular priest was established by the highest authority; in order that there might be no question about it, he had it specially certificated. This done, he did not keep the required residence as canon, or care, apparently, even to hold his title; but one notices that within a very short time, about as soon as possible in such cases, one would say, Antoine Rabelais's family property, which must have been fairly considerable even among six heirs, was reapportioned. It seems to us highly probable that his interest in secularization may have had this contingency somewhat in view. The question, however, puts conjecture at defiance. There is no evidence that he inherited any landed property, which was practically all there was to inherit in those days; there is not a shred of evidence that he ever became a landholder. Yet the only reason one can think of, besides a property-reason, why he should have taken all this trouble to get his ecclesiastical status straightened up, is that he desired the regularization of his social status that would automatically ensue; and this is just as probable, as far as evidence goes, as that he had an eye to his father's

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property—it would, in fact, be more probable, if the reapportionment had not taken place just at the right time for the coincidence to be suggestive.

At the time of his father's death in January, 1535, it will be remembered, Rabelais was back in his old place at the head of the Lyons hospital, after his furlough in Italy. On 13 February he disappeared without warning, having drawn his salary due him for the period August-January. The first wind that the hospital authorities got of his disappearance was next day when three physicians, friends of Rabelais, presented themselves and applied for the vacant place. The authorities were astonished at this and put them off, saying that they knew nothing of any vacant place; nor did they make any move in the matter for ten days. They met on 23 February to consider the situation, but did nothing, as there was a rumour afloat that Rabelais was at Grenoble, and would return; nor did they replace him until 5 March, when they elected one of the three applicants, Pierre du Castel. Rabelais had evidently "tipped off" his three friends, in confidence, there being no other way that they could know of his intentions. M. Abel Lefranc thinks that he did this out of solicitude for his hospital-patients, whom he was leaving in the lurch; but we cannot satisfy ourselves of this. Evidently there were other physicians about, and the deliberate behaviour of the authorities would make it seem that the emergency was not acute.

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We should hazard the guess that Rabelais had in mind to do his friends a good turn by quietly letting them know that there would be a pretty fair job going begging next day, and that if they wished to try for it they had better be on hand promptly. His successor's salary was thirty dollars a year instead of forty; and this fact, taken with the trustees' reluctance and hesitation about appointing a successor, in spite of Rabelais's having "absented himself from the city and from the said hospital without leave, for the second time," appears to be another incidental testimony to the esteem in which Rabelais's professional proficiency was held.

No one knows why he thus took French leave of his situation, or where he went; but there can be little doubt that he had prudential reasons for remaining as much as possible out of sight. It is notorious that an unbridled license of persecution puts not only the worst passions in the saddle, but also the worst people; and in the first months of 1535, anyone who could be reasonably or unreasonably suspected of pro-Protestant sympathies was quite at the mercy of any local Dogberry whose homicidal mania felt the exhilaration of a free rein. As is always the case, all over France matters went further than the sovereign power meant they should. "All sorts of people were being picked up," says M. Batiffol. "Even the possession of a Lutheran book was enough to put one under suspicion. Shoemakers were seized, linen-sellers, printers, book-

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sellers, ecclesiastics, wealthy merchants, students, attorneys. . . . Those who got off easiest were forced to recant publicly either before a church or at the high mass, clad in a white shirt, barefooted, and holding a candle in their hands; then they were scourged with rods and banished, and their property confiscated." The France of 1535, in short, was much like the United States of 1863 or 1917. The bourgeois spirit, the animus of officialdom and the temper of the mob were all no doubt as savagely vindictive towards superiority as they are now; they no doubt were as feverishly desirous as they now are to parade their own orthodoxy, regularity, and patriotism at someone's else expense, no matter whose. So it was a good time for the humanists, interested in none of these things, to remain under cover and await a general return to some sort of sanity and decency. The cause that they represented would not gain anything by their doing otherwise, for we repeat—we repeat it because the fact is so important and so little understood that even professed humanists understand it oftentimes but very imperfectly—it was altogether an alien cause. Humanism had nothing to do with any theological system, ecclesiastical system, or political system, and nothing therefore could it stand to gain by the ups and downs of any. Like religion itself, which is the highest special mode or form of humanist aspiration, it could say only to the individual spirit that "the Kingdom of God is *within you.*"

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Quite probably Rabelais went over from Lyons to the Poitou, and spent the first half of the year with his old friend, the nobleman-prelate d'Estissac, bishop of Maillezais. M. Bourilly has discerned some indications of this in the nature of the commissions which Rabelais carried out for d'Estissac in Italy, in the latter part of 1535. Nothing is really known of him, however, before 15 July, when he set out once more for Rome in his old capacity of personal physician to Jean du Bellay. Du Bellay had been named cardinal in May, after a great deal of steady intrigue and conniving which he had engineered at the king's instance during his previous errand at Rome in the matter of Henry VIII's divorce. His designation as cardinal was a great triumph for the moderate party in the papal court, which wished to come to some kind of composition with the German dissenters, and to carry on a peaceful reformation of long-standing abuses in the Catholic system; abuses which the German dissenters especially complained of, and which Paul III was himself much disposed to abate. It was a corresponding setback to the influence of Charles V at the papal court, and a wet blanket to the inquisitorial zeal of the Sorbonne and to militant orthodoxy in general at home. By the middle of the year, indeed, his hot fit ended, Francis I decided that the persecution of Protestantism had gone about far enough, and he took measures to stop it; but it had gained such momentum that it was a long time

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slowing down, and some of its latest manifestations, for instance the massacre of the Vaudois, were the most appalling.

Du Bellay's ostensible errand at Rome this time was to receive his cardinal's red hat; but, like the usual run of diplomatic pretexts, that was a small matter. What he was really after was the undermining of Charles V's political influence with the pope and a corresponding accession of French influence; and in this he was quite successful. The details of his stay in Rome, which lasted from the first day of August, 1535, to the last day of February, 1536, are in many respects interesting, but have little to do directly with Rabelais. On the way to Rome, the cardinal's party spent four days at Ferrara, where Clément Marot and Lyon Jamet had taken refuge from persecution; no doubt Rabelais saw them there. Du Bellay's errand at Ferrara was the unpleasant one of trying to smooth out domestic difficulties that had come up between Duke Ercole of Ferrara and his wife, Renée of France, the daughter of Louis XII and sister-in-law to Francis I. There was a grim humour in the situation. Renée was an able woman, without beauty or attractiveness, obstinate, extravagant, and waspish. She was well aware that she had been married off into Italy for purely political purposes, in order to keep the duchy of Ferrara safe on the French side of the great French-Spanish struggle, and resentment did not improve her natu-

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ral disposition. There was a good deal to be said for her, no doubt, but there was also something to be said for the duke. He was disappointed in the marriage, in the first instance, naturally having hoped to draw something better-looking and better-tempered in the great lottery. Renée also had never made any effort to adjust herself to her surroundings or to conceal her indifference to things Italian; she lived, moved, and had her being like a Frenchwoman, and like a hard-headed Bretonne at that—which she was—even dressing in the French mode. When she came to Ferrara, moreover, she brought her former governess with her, Michelle de Saubonne, wife of the duke de Soubise, a most formidable person, who practically took over the management of the whole ducal establishment, apparently, and made herself as disagreeable as her large opportunities allowed. She in turn brought her daughter, Anne of Parthenay, who was a good Latinist, and whom the duke—poor soul!—declared pathetically to be the worst of the lot. So with three strident, mischief-making, and wholly odious Frenchwomen on his hands, the duke's life was scarcely any life at all.

Du Bellay came into this rats' nest just as the duke had determined to turn out Madame de Soubise and her daughter; the lady had been sending vivid reports to Paris of his bad treatment of Renée, and in his indignation and general wretchedness, he meditated deserting Francis I and going over to the opposition.

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Francis had already sent down one ambassador, who was none too well received; he now made handsome and sympathetic overtures to the duke by the hand of du Bellay, acquiesced fully in the calling-off of Madame de Soubise and her bedevillings, but the duke remained disgruntled. Du Bellay could not get him to sign a written pledge of alliance; all he could do was to point out the advantages of keeping in with France, and the disadvantages of going over to Spain; and having done this, he marshalled his suite and set forth for Rome.

Notwithstanding the seriousness of this affair, certain features of it—what modern dramatists might call its "human interest"—must have entertained Rabelais immensely. Part of Rabelais's routine at Rome was of a diplomatic nature; he was to have an eye on the progress of affairs at the papal court, and report it to d'Estissac. In a letter of 30 December, 1535, he reports that the duke, after shillyshallying for six months, had finally gone over to Charles V without giving the French ambassador at Ferrara any notice of his intention, and that the ambassador had accordingly withdrawn to France. Rabelais observes sardonically that "it is likely Madame Renée will be annoyed at this; the duke has sent away Madame de Soubise, her governess, and has her waited on by Italian ladies, which is not a good symptom."

Du Bellay had much better luck with the pope than

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with the harassed and desperate Ercole of Ferrara. The accomplished, moderate, and judicious Paul III was inclined towards the French side, fearing too great power in the hands of the emperor, but the best he could do was a benevolent neutrality; more than this would have got him crushed between the two. To be pope in the first half of the sixteenth century was to enjoy no sinecure; no one was in a better position to realize that "needs must when the devil drives." He approved of Francis I's surreptitious aid to the German Protestants, who were suffering under Charles's declared policy of clearing the Protestant heresy out of the Empire, and whose princes had just drawn together for self-protection in the Lutheran league of Schmalkald. At the time of du Bellay's start for Rome, indeed, Francis I had made a great gesture of humiliating the emperor, by sending a personal letter to the reformer Melancthon, inviting him to come over to France. French Protestants must have had to keep *au courant* to the day, almost to the very hour, on the progress of international politics, in order to know where they stood while these violent oscillations between persecution and overture were going on; indeed, Melancthon's crince had no confidence in Francis's invitation, and put down his foot against Melancthon's going.

But Francis's policy in general was easily understandable, and it is rather astonishing that the Protes-

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tant leaders did not understand it better. As long as the Spanish rivalry was on, which bade fair to last indefinitely, and as long as Charles V maintained a rigorous anti-Protestant policy, especially in the Germanies, it was money in Francis's pocket to keep on speaking terms with Protestantism. Catholicism in France could perfectly well stand it, for ecclesiastical abuses were fewer and lighter in France than in the Germanies or even in England, and the people were, on the whole, not as yet dissatisfied to the sweating-point. Besides, the French throne was less tempted to confiscate church property than Henry VIII or the German princes were, because by agreement with the pope in 1516, Francis I held the nomination to bishoprics and benefices. But while Protestantism might have safe going in France, and even some measure of countenance, it could have them only so long as it played by the rules. When it pushed its tenets to the implied detriment of the royal power, or when it resorted to gratuitous and indecent demonstrations against Catholic doctrine or practice, it had to be reminded that France was officially a kingdom, and a Catholic kingdom.

Paul III understood this policy and did not object to it. The moderate spirits in politics, like d'Estissac and the brothers du Bellay, humanists like Budé and Rabelais, understood it thoroughly and approved of it. It was never so much the doctrinal or spiritual content

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of Protestantism as the bumptiousness of its professors, their rooted indisposition to live and let live, that offended either them or the king. John Calvin fled from Paris to Basel at the outbreak of persecution, but in 1536 he dedicated to Francis I his great exposition of the Protestant position, the monumental *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and Francis I did not disallow it. Francis was neither a great ruler nor even, on the whole, a good one; his brief and spasmodic persecutions were a reprehensible, left-handed, and ineffectual way with his problem, as persecution always is. But there is much to be said for his general policy towards Protestantism—this much, anyway, that in the circumstances of the time, it should have satisfied the Protestants as the best they could get, and much better than they could have got under any other Catholic régime.

Rabelais published the Fourth Book in 1552, the year before he died. At the end of the thirty-second chapter he mentions some of the creatures brought forth upon the world by Antiphysis or Antinature—the reader will remember the passage on Physis and Antiphysis which we quoted in our last chapter. Under this figure he holds up as alike reprehensible the unspiritual, irreligious, formal, self-seeking, and self-aggrandizing elements in both Catholicism and Protestantism. One may easily see what moved him to this. At this time Calvin had been sixteen years at Geneva,

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where he had set himself up at the head of a most extraordinary theocracy; something more or less like it was subsequently seen in New England. Calvin made himself not only the interpreter but the administrator of the Divine Will; he was both ecclesiastical authority and political boss. His régime overspread human existence at Geneva with indescribable hideousness and tedium. There were no civilized recreations, no life that could properly be called social, no drama, no festivities, no romance or poetry—one poet's verse got its author beheaded. In Calvin's view, adultery was a capital crime; and he burned at the stake a fellow-reformer, the Spaniard Servetus, for holding irregular opinions about the Trinity. Rabelais did not live to see this last-named triumph of embattled Protestant orthodoxy; it happened in 1553, a few months after his death. But without that, he had seen quite enough of the administration of Calvin to justify the judgment that all along he had held in common with Erasmus, Budé, More, and the majority of sound humanists, that whatever might be thought of Catholicism, the Protestant temper promised very little that a civilized spirit could regard hopefully by way of alternative.

II

During his half-year in Rome, Rabelais was very much occupied with engineering "his business," as he

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calls it in his letters to d'Estissac—that is, his securing the papal brief establishing his ecclesiastical status—through the papal court. Two things are worth remarking: first, that he had the free use of the king's name in pushing his case. He writes d'Estissac with some satisfaction that he had hardly any occasion to "make use of the personal services of my lord cardinal du Bellay, nor my lord ambassador [the resident ambassador at Rome, Charles Hémard, bishop of Mascon] though of their goodness they offered them to me in the matter, and not merely their recommendation and influence; but I used only the name of the king." Evidently he was *persona gratissima* with Francis I, and under no suspicion even when persecution was going at full blast; evidently also he could count without peradventure on all his highly-placed friends and protectors. His case at Rome was managed by Cardinal Ghinucci, the learned judge of the Palace, and the eminent cardinal Simonetta, auditor of the Chamber; and the second fact worth remarking is that he got all his business transacted for practically nothing. He tells d'Estissac he is assured that "the arrangement will be made for me gratuitously, although as a rule the pope gives nothing gratis, except what goes in a routine way through the Camera." Evidently Rabelais had nothing to fear from the central government at this time, or, indeed, at any time; so the secrecy surrounding his disappearance from Lyons was most probably due to

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local circumstances. None of his influential friends were near Lyons at the time, and it would have been easy enough for some ignorant jack-in-office to have picked him up and railroaded him to the stake or gallows before any of them could get word of it. In all probability, therefore, he felt that the closer he kept to the liberal and humanist wing of the nobility while the east wind was blowing, the less chance there would be of some stupid local official's identifying him arbitrarily with the proscribed cause of Protestantism.

While in Rome, Rabelais was also very busy with keeping his eye on public affairs for d'Estissac. He corresponded with him in cipher, and many of his reports—all his cipher-reports—are now lost. The few existing scraps of his correspondence show pretty well his quality as a diplomatic observer, and they also contain many *obiter dicta* of interest. He sends up to Ligugé, for instance, a variety of grains, garden-seed, and salads, and gives special directions about their planting and care. He very frankly draws on his patron for money, quite according to the practice of the times, a practice which by the standards of our times is thought to be parasitic and degrading, though one can hardly see the logic of this view, since d'Estissac regarded association with Rabelais as much more than his money's worth, as indeed it was. In this connexion Rabelais writes as many travellers used to write from Paris to America in the early days of our republic: "I

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see in this city a thousand pretty things, and cheap, which are brought from Cyprus, Candia and Constantinople. If you like, I will send what I think fittest of them to you and my lady d'Estissac. The carriage from hence as far as Lyons will cost nothing."

The reader may be interested in getting at Rabelais by what may be called his official side, through a specimen of his diplomatic reporting. It must be remembered that the peace of Cambrai, in 1529—the "Ladies' Peace," so called because the preliminaries were arranged by Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis I, and Margaret, mother of Charles V—amounted to little more than a truce, and events were now rapidly running up to the third Franco-Spanish War, which broke out in June, 1536. In January, 1536, Rabelais wrote d'Estissac:

> I have not yet presented your letters to my lord bishop of Saintes, for he is not back from Naples, whither he went with the cardinals Salviati and Rodolfi; he will be here within two days. . . . I understand their business with the emperor [Charles V, who was then in Naples] has not gone as well as they hoped, and that the emperor told them flatly that it was at their desire and request, as well as that of the late pope Clement, their kinsman and near relative, that he had appointed Alexander de' Medici duke of Florence and Pisa; something which he himself had no idea of doing, nor would have done. But to depose him now would be the act of a juggler, who does and undoes the same thing. Therefore they might as well make up their

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minds to acknowledge him as their duke and lord, to obey him as vassals and subjects, and do so without fail. . . .

The cardinal of Siena and the cardinal Cesarini, who had been chosen by the pope and the college as legates to the emperor, returned the thirteenth of this month. They have managed so that the emperor has put off his visit to Rome until the end of February. If I had as many crowns as the pope would grant days of pardon . . . and similar favours to any one who would put it off five or six years further, I should be richer than Jacques Cœur ever was.

. . . I really believe that ambassadors from all parts of Italy will appear before the emperor; and he very well knows how to play his game of getting money out of them, as was discovered about ten days ago. I am not yet fully informed of the sharp trick that he turned at Naples, but I shall send you a report on it hereafter.

On 29 February, 1536, du Bellay left Rome in great haste and great secrecy, in disguise, and without his suite, without even his physician—Rabelais was left behind—escorted by only a corporal's guard of horsemen. He went as fast as he could to Lyons, where he was to meet the court and at the pope's instance to interview the king about the emperor's evident aims and designs. The death of the duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, four months before, had thrown the rich duchy between the king and the emperor like a bone between two dogs. By the peace of Cambrai, Francis I was supposed to abandon all designs on Milan; but the progressive strengthening of the emperor's position in

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Italy, which worried king and pope alike, caused him to re-assert himself by proposing that one of his sons should marry the widowed duchess. The pope looked favourably on this idea, but kept doggedly neutral *de facto*, which was an embarrassment to the emperor—his ministers showed a good deal of irritation at it—and a corresponding advantage to the king. The emperor, wishing to play for time, showed himself agreeable and conciliatory towards the pope, and appeared to take the suggestion of the duchess's marriage to a French prince as perhaps on the whole a good idea; he would look into it and think the matter over. Meanwhile, as the pope became at once aware, he accelerated his military preparations to the utmost. Francis became tired of his temporizing, and issued an ultimatum; either the duchess would marry his second son, the duke of Orléans, or there would be war. Charles V played for further delay; he said he was considering the young duke's candidacy; and then it was that Paul III sent for du Bellay, and urged him to go back to France, get an audience with the king as soon as he could, and show him that he had no time to lose.

Francis I should have acted with more promptness; it was not du Bellay's fault that he did not. Du Bellay reached Lyons, where the court was visiting, on 10 March. When he left Rome, it was with the intention of returning, but Francis I decided to retain him. His suite accordingly left Rome 11 April, under a safe-

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conduct from Paul III, who was genuinely grieved at losing him. Du Bellay had acquitted himself well; his mission had gained a good deal of ground for the French cause, and he himself had gained the highest personal esteem of his king and the pope. Three months later, when the war was finally on and the king went forth at the head of his army, he put du Bellay in charge of Paris and the Ile-de-France, Picardy, and the Champagne; and in eight days du Bellay had Paris completely fortified and provisioned for a year, and he was equally prompt with regard to the other cities committed to his care. These preparations were unnecessary, as it turned out; the emperor's forces did not get that far; but they set a record of promptness, thoroughness, and despatch. France has always been remarkably lucky at commanding a high degree of ability in her public service, and particularly lucky in producing the right man in a crisis; but among all her conspicuously able and devoted public servants, she never did better by herself than in the two brothers Guillaume and Jean du Bellay.

III

The period 1536-1538 was one of desultory campaigning; like every war-period, it was an uninteresting time, all human activities of any real character and consequence being subordinated to the dull and squalid

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business of war. What little is known of Rabelais during this period can hardly be made into a readable narrative. One gets on track of him here and there, he appears for a moment and then disappears, practically all record of him being casual and incidental. We shall do the best we can with what there is, but we can promise the reader no better than dry and flaccid pages. He probably returned from Rome to France with the rest of du Bellay's suite that left the papal court 11 April, 1536; and the next news of him is in the early spring of 1537, at the banquet of literati in Paris, held to celebrate Dolet's pardon for the murder of the painter Compaing at Lyons. We have made mention of this elsewhere. On 3 April, 1537, he took his degree of licentiate in medicine at the university of Montpellier; or, to be exact, he paid his fees on that date. On 22 May he proceeded doctor of medicine at Montpellier, under the sponsorship of Antoine Griphe. For the next four months, the only trace of him is by way of mention in some Latin poems of Salmon Macrin and Étienne Dolet. From these it would appear that in the spring—let us guess from March to June, for no one can say how much earlier than March; possibly, indeed, most of the winter—he practiced medicine in Narbonne and its vicinity. In June he seems to have fixed his residence again at Lyons, drawn back, no doubt, by the lure of a cultural

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centre; he may also have had a sweetheart there; and there he practiced medicine until September.

One interesting fact brought out by Dolet is that at this juncture he gave demonstrations in anatomy at Lyons, before a picked audience. This was a great innovation; and it seems to show what we have already remarked of him, that while Rabelais was a classicist in medicine, he was a sound and rational classicist; that is, he was quite open to the experimental method, as long as its use was controlled by thorough acquaintance with the classics of the profession. It seems clear that he did not object to experimentation, but only to ignorant and random experimentation. It was this finely regulated hospitality to innovation that seems to have impressed Dolet; in his verses, tracing the progress of the scientific tradition, he places Rabelais among the six men who were doing greatest credit to French medicine; while Macrin, on the other hand, praises Rabelais rather for his skill as a practitioner.

On 10 August, Rabelais got into trouble at Lyons. He had kept up his interest in public affairs, and kept open his sources of information about them. He wrote a letter to a correspondent who cannot now be identified, imprudently giving some political news, gossip, or opinions, and this letter was intercepted and handed over to the cardinal de Tournon, who immediately sent it to the chancellor du Bourg with the comment that it was written to "one of the worst libertines in Rome,"

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and asking for advice and instructions. Meanwhile he forbade Rabelais to leave Lyons; he would have imprisoned him at once, except that the tenor of the letter was such as to show clearly that Rabelais was quite loyal to the king, and had been guilty of nothing worse than indiscretion. The circumstance indicated beyond doubt, however, that Lyons, notwithstanding its attractions, was no place for Rabelais. There were two factions at the court, the one which we have mentioned as including the du Bellays and as favouring a generally liberal policy towards the Protestants; and another, made up of bitter-enders headed by the cardinal de Tournon, which was all for a policy of *Schrecklichkeit* against them. Probably Rabelais had been kept under surveillance ever since he came up from taking his degree at Montpellier; the cardinal could hardly take action against him, but he could make things unpleasant for him, and as far as may be known, he seems to have done so.

Fortunately, however, in a very few days Guillaume du Bellay passed through Lyons on his way to Piedmont to assume his functions as viceroy, having been detached from his diplomatic duties in Germany; so much is inferred from the record that on 28 August, the cardinal de Tournon took occasion to send a large sum of money by Guillaume du Bellay to a correspondent in Piedmont. It is highly probable that Rabelais also took occasion to bespeak du Bellay's good offices to

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get himself out from under the cardinal's eye. However this may be, he did leave Lyons shortly afterward.

Within two months he was again at Montpellier, where he delivered a course on the Prognostics of Hippocrates. The academic year at Montpellier was divided into the Great and Little Ordinary. The former ran from St. Luke's Day (18 October) to Easter, during which time the regular courses were given; and the latter from Quasimodo Monday to St. John's Day (24 June), during which period courses were given by visiting lecturers, licentiates, and bachelors. Each Ordinary was preceded by an Assembly, at which all those who had the degree of master had to be present; in the autumn this Assembly ran from St. Michael's Day (29 September) to 18 October. The university record says only that Rabelais chose for his subject the book of the Prognostics and that he expounded it in Greek. This entry is made in a different handwriting from the rest of the record; it may be Rabelais's own. The use of the past tense seems to show that the notation may have been made after the lectures were given, and this suggests that Rabelais may not have attended the Assembly, but may have come down only in time to inaugurate his course, 18 October. The only interest of all this conjecture is that Francis I and his court, including cardinal Jean du Bellay, visited Lyons, 1 October, and it is possible that Rabelais remained there until they

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came, in order to get the matter of the intercepted letter straightened out once for all, if perchance any report of it had reached the king's ears. This does not seem altogether probable, but it is possible.

Rabelais lectured all winter at Montpellier, throughout the Great Ordinary, with success that his friends describe as sensational. Boysonné speaks of the crowds pressing upon his lectures, and Susanneau celebrates him in verse. On 17 November, a month after his course was inaugurated, he received an écu of gold for a public demonstration of anatomy in the amphitheatre of Montpellier; and it was probably at this period also that he invented the surgical instrument called *glottotomon.*

Everything concerning Rabelais's life in the way of incident during the year 1538 is in the deepest uncertainty; yet curiously he was then and for the next eight years at the very top of a brilliant professional, literary, and official career, and in the best of favour and reputation. Certain isolated facts are known, but their chronology is a matter of pure conjecture. It is known, for instance, that at some time in or about 1538, the king appointed him master of requests. It is also known that he was one of the royal suite at the historic three-days' conference between the king and the emperor, Charles V, 14-16 July, 1538, at Aiguesmortes, on the Mediterranean, not far east of Montpellier—this year the Third Franco-Spanish War subsided into a

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truce that lasted until 1542. Again, it is known that Rabelais was in attendance on the king two weeks later at Lyons, 30 July. Putting these items together, the inference is that the king gave him his court appointment at some time before July, since Rabelais would most probably not be travelling in the royal suite on this historic occasion, unless in an official capacity.

IV

It is known, too, that Rabelais had a son named Théodule, who was born at Lyons, and died in infancy about this time. This is absolutely all that is known; it is only a conjecture, though a probable one, that the child's death occurred at this juncture. Not even a conjecture is possible concerning the identity of the child's mother or the circumstances of the attachment. What makes this the more remarkable is that there was nothing clandestine about the affair. A cardinal, very possibly a king, had stood with bishops beside the cradle; a bishop wrote Latin elegiacs on the occasion of the child's death. "Lyons was his birthplace, Rabelais his father," wrote Boysonné; "he who knows not both, knows not the two greatest things in the world." [1] Nothing was thought amiss of it; there was no occasion for concealment, but quite the contrary, such being no

[1] Lugdunum patria et pater est Rabelæsus; utrumque
Qui nescit nescit maxima in orbe duo.

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unusual experience for eminent churchmen—the pope Paul III himself was blessed with a wife and family, and his son Pier Luigi was no particular credit to him, at that. Yet in spite of the birth of Rabelais's son being apparently a quite notable event, every circumstance connected with it, everything but the fact itself, is beyond any range of conjecture.

It seems improbable that Rabelais had other children. In a work published fifty years after his death, there is a casual reference to him, and a mention of a manuscript in possession "of the author's daughter." There is, however, no other suggestion of anything of the kind in the whole repertory of Rabelaisiana. External evidence and the evidence of his writings alike indicate that Rabelais had uncommonly little biological interest in womankind; his life seems to have been singularly free from such preoccupations. He has a great deal to say, mostly in the way of witticism, about the power of sex-appetite, its place in nature, and its influence in determining conduct; and his treatment of these subjects is most outspoken. His glossary is a curious combination of the professional and the peasant-vernacular. But commentators, especially English-speaking commentators, have never, we believe, sufficiently remarked the fact that with all this forthrightness, his writing communicates an unmistakable authoritative impression of detachment. As Count Tolstoy observed in his penetrating criticism of de Mau-

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passant, one may write in any way one likes about anything one likes, without risk of offence, provided one makes it clear that one's own moral relation to one's subject is correct; and this Rabelais always does. There is no way, indeed, of counterfeiting the appearance of a correct relation. If one's moral relation to one's subject is actually correct, one cannot disguise its correctness; if it is incorrect, a reader who has any literary experience will perceive the incorrectness, no matter how one may try to mislead him. It is one of the most interesting limitations of the literary art that the moment a writer takes his pen in hand, no matter what he undertakes to write about, or in what way he elects to write about it, that moment he gives himself away; he is bound to do so, he cannot possibly help it; the tone and accent of his writing will be those of his inmost predilections, preoccupations, and tendencies. The tone and accent of Rabelais's writings betray no morbid obsession of any kind, but quite the opposite; and this is as true of him when he is speaking in his own person as when he is putting words in the mouth of one of his characters.

Coleridge, the one English-speaking critic of the last century who seems to have discerned this merit in Rabelais—he did not delimit it clearly, he more or less fumbled it, but after a fashion he did discern it—Coleridge said, "I could write a treatise in praise of the moral elevation of Rabelais's work which would

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make the church stare and the conventicle groan, and yet would be truth, and nothing but the truth." It is perhaps the crowning honour of the Elizabethan translators of Rabelais that in this respect they have preserved their author's integrity wholly inviolate. No praise is enough for this achievement. The tone and accent of their translation are precisely those of the original. Not once do they fail to give the reader a due sense of the author's abounding detachment, the sense of an invincible freedom from anything approaching a prurient self-consciousness, a tainted and viscid lubricity. Mr. W. F. Smith's translation, on the other hand, with all its merits, does not communicate this sense; the reader may make his own comparisons. Mr. Smith's scholarship is worthy of all praise, but his literary tact, his delicacy of perception on a point such as this that we are making, are most inadequate. They may be fairly judged, we think, by his habit of substituting blanks for such words as he thinks are objectionable; if there is one thing above all others that would distort the residual impression of Rabelais left upon the reader's mind by a perusal of his writings, it is any gratuitous suggestion of nasty-niceness on the part of a translator. The terrible sentence of the Italians, *Traduttore traditore*, holds a translator as much responsible for the moral quality of his original as for its idiom and grammar; and in the case of Rabelais, Mr. Smith's device alone would be enough to in-

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duce almost irresistibly an egregious misconception. Again we appeal to the reader: let him take, not Mr. Smith's text, but the Urquhart and Motteux text of some appropriate passage, substitute blanks for the words that Mr. Smith prescribes, and see if he can retain unimpaired his impression of the author's sound and wholesome moral relation to his subject.

We speak of this at length because no one hitherto, as far as we know, except for the hint given by Coleridge, has ever brought out clearly the testimony of Rabelais's work to his own "moral elevation," even in those features which are all but universally cited against him. Nor has any one, to our knowledge, shown clearly the part that must be played by literary tact and delicacy of insight in disengaging and appreciating that testimony. Mr. Smith's resources of tact and insight are sufficiently declared in the preface to his translation; at least, his reader is forewarned of their poverty:

> For the grossness in the *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* it is not so easy to find toleration. . . . It may be said that in the joviality of his spirit he allowed himself and others too great a latitude, and readily fell in with the broadness, not to say grossness, of speech which was prevalent in the highest as well as the lowest society of his time, and that he went so far as to press into the service of coarseness his great anatomical knowledge. For this I am able to find adequate excuse. It may be that he used his grossness as an attraction

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to his readers; it may be as a screen and shield, under cover of which he could better direct his satirical strokes and escape punishment for them; it may be, in the Third Book, the line he was to take was marked out for him by the discussion between Bouchard and Tiraqueau, which is supposed to be the source of his inspiration on the subject of Panurge's marriage; still in that, as well as in the abominations that disfigure the first two Books, I am unable to find sufficient excuse. However, there the book is, for us to make the best and not the worst of. It is *margaritam in sterquilinio quærere.* But the pearl is there, and it is worth getting.

Such trash as this adds terribly to one's weight of doubt that Anglo-American literary criticism will ever develop, let alone the tact and sensitiveness that we spoke of, but even the elementary instinct for the main thing, the assurance of what it is that one really ought to drive at, the sense of perspective and measure that tells one unfailingly where to rest lightly and where to come down with one's full weight. If criticism ever did develop thus far, as French, Italian, Belgian, and Dutch literary criticism have so admirably developed, our literary world would regard the stupendous tableaux of Rabelais, in respect of the point we are now addressing, precisely as the artistic world regards the Venus of Titian or the groups of Jordaens. A person who tried to make out that Jordaens was interested in "grossness" for its own sake, on the strength, say, of the group in the Brussels gallery, called "The King Drinks," would be at once put down by unanimous

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critical opinion as a fool. What interested Jordaens was great portraiture, incomparable portraiture, and he would make great portraiture out of any kind of subject that happened to come along. The suggestion that the subject should not appear in all respects in character, and the implication that its "grossness" is rudely purposeful, is therefore at once seen to be gratuitous, absurd, and unwholesome.

If the reader will carefully collate a number of Rabelais's representative tableaux, he will have no trouble whatever about perceiving as clearly as in the groups of Jordaens, van Ostade, or Jan Steen, the one thing and the only thing in which the author was interested. The story of Seyny John, in the thirty-seventh chapter of the Third Book, contains nothing that could possibly offend the sensibilities of Mr. Smith; neither does the story of the drowning of Dingdong's sheep, in the eighth chapter of the Fourth Book; nor does the episode of the physetere, in the thirty-third and thirty-fourth chapters of the Fourth Book; nor does the description of Gaster, in the fifty-seventh chapter; nor do many other narratives of equal power and brilliance; but we have cited enough. On the other hand, the kind of critical judgment that Mr. Smith represents would have sad difficulties with the two stories told in the last chapter of the Fourth Book, or with the two that Panurge tells in the nineteenth chapter of the Third Book. Very well; let the reader

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compare these two sets of narratives, grouped as they are with reference only to "grossness," and he will find that they both bear exactly the same testimony to their author. Rabelais had no inflamed interest in grossness, nor had he any inflamed interest in the avoidance of grossness. Neither meant anything to him. What he was interested in was great story-telling, incomparable story-telling, and he would make a great story, told in a great way, out of whatever happened to come into his head. As we have said before, so we repeat with emphasis, anything that a really great artist finds coming to his mill is grist. The four stories that we have cited for their "grossness," as they come out from under Rabelais's hand, are as great, as distinguished, and quite as impersonally told, as those in the other group. Considered as sheer specimens of story-telling, there are none greater in any literature than the story of Villon at the English court, and the story of messer Pantolfe de la Cassina. Let the reader view them impartially, as he would view the portraiture of Jordaens, having carefully rid his judgment of the baneful influence of Mr. Smith's school of criticism—if that be possible—and we cheerfully agree to abide by his judgment on the soundness of their author's character.

If the reader wishes to make a collateral test to help true up his judgment, we may be permitted to propose one. The story of Hans Carvel's ring, told by Friar John of the Funnels in the twenty-eighth chapter of

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the Third Book, would probably go as directly against the grain of Mr. Smith's school as anything to be found in Rabelais's work; as directly, we may say, as Mr. Smith's own treatment of it goes against our grain. That story has been told many times. It occurs in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, in the *Facetiæ* of Poggio, and the *Ducento Novelle* of Malespini, and in la Fontaine; so it has been handled, first and last, by no mean story-tellers. Let the reader look it up in these quarters, and then see what becomes of it at the hand of an unapproached master of story-telling in the grand style. Let him also see how competently the Urquhart and Motteux translation conveys the sense of the author's complete disengagement from everything except the prosecution of a consummate literary art. Where, for example, will he find a touch of style to equal the dreamer's reply to Satan's offer of the ring? "'Gramercy,' quoth Hans Carvel, 'my lord devil, I renounce Mahomet if ever it shall come off my finger.'" Or, again, the description of Hans Carvel and his bride:

> He was a studious, learned and ingenious man, a scientific person, full of knowledge, a great philosopher, of a sound judgment, of a prime wit, good sense, clear-spirited, an honest creature, courteous, charitable, a giver of alms, and of a jovial humour, a boon companion and a merry blade, if ever there was any in the world; he was somewhat gorbellied, with a little shake in his head, and in effect unwieldy of his body; in his old age he took to wife the bailiff of Concordat's daughter,

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young, fair, jolly, gallant, spruce, frisky, brisk, neat, feat, smirk, smug, compt, quaint, gay, fine, trixy, trim, decent, proper, graceful, handsome, beautiful, comely, and kind a little too much to her neighbours and acquaintance.

Nothing like that is to be found in other writers who have handled this story before Rabelais or after him; nothing like it is to be found anywhere—there is but one Rabelais. His superiority is perceived all the better if he is read aloud. One who writes as Rabelais does, even more for the ear than for the eye, should always be read aloud, even when one is reading to oneself, at least until one becomes so accustomed to his style that the sight of a sentence at once suggests to the ear its force, rhythm, and cadence.

As we said of Jordaens, if Mr. Smith would imply, as he seems to do, either that Rabelais should have somehow knaved the people of his drama into thinking and speaking entirely out of character on occasion, or that in their stead he should have created other people who could be depended upon always to think and speak according to Mr. Smith's notions of propriety, all we can say is that his prescription seems to us fantastic and exorbitant. We are reminded of the curious convention whereby the Flemish painters Italianized the faces of the sacred personages in their religious groups, leaving them devoid of all expression. The effect of this is most grotesque. Rabelais was for-

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tunate in living at a period when no such convention as Mr. Smith represents was imposed upon literature, and when he might freely permit his people to think and speak in character, as they invariably do. Rabelais may have been a little careless of his mechanics, especially his mechanics of supernaturalism, but he never went astray in dialogue. In this matter of "grossness," the reader may remark, for instance, the invariable difference between the grossness of Panurge and that of Friar John. Each thinks and speaks in character; the bluff peasant hardihood of Friar John comes out freely in his table-talk with Gargantua, in the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of the First Book, or in his robust complaint of boredom during the ship's voyage, in the fifteenth chapter of the Fifth Book; while Panurge's grossness is prevailingly that of the resourceful and polished *raconteur*, as may be seen in the two superb anecdotes which he relates to Pantagruel in the nineteenth chapter of the Third Book. But from whatever conversational representation any personage may make of himself, one gets always the same sense of the author's complete detachment of interest from everything but getting the story better told than any one else in the world could tell it.

Those who miss this sense of detachment, as Mr. Smith does, or who choose to disregard its intimations, should not undertake to deal critically with Rabelais, or, even, indeed, read him; they are disqualified for

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enjoying him, and without knowing how to enjoy him deeply, one cannot know the actual truth about him, or receive much benefit from his acquaintance; nor will any endowment of scholarship or merely technical ability, however great, do duty for a defective spiritual insight. In saying this, of course, we are only paraphrasing Matthew Arnold's well-known penetrating observation on the study of the Scriptures, so admirably applicable to our subject; and here, it seems to us, is a point that may well be taken into account by those whose connexion with sixteenth century literature is professional. If the course of critical opinion in this country is to be set by the trade-gild of the doctors of philosophy—and there appears no way of escape from this fate—then we think the graduate schools have a duty far higher than what is contemplated by the training of mere literary technicians. Let them first inculcate upon their fledgling doctors of philosophy some measure of literary tact, delicacy of perception, ardour, and precision of spiritual sympathy; and only then, if need be, set them to counting up how many words Rabelais makes masculine that in modern French are feminine.

V

After this long digression, which had to come in somewhere and may as well come in here as anywhere,

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we return to the singularly difficult and obscure chronology of what we have called Rabelais's "official period," the period of his greatest honour, eminence, and prosperity. On 13 August, 1539, a certain Guido Bellais of Lyons, a student at the University of Montpellier, chose Rabelais as his "patron"; but it does not follow that Rabelais was there at the time. The second division of his father's estate took place next day, 14 August. This transaction, unfortunately, is only documented in a second-hand way, through the registration of certain rents due to the church of St.-Maurice, at Chinon. Here it is stated only that there was a second division on this date; no details are given, so it is not even known whether Francis Rabelais came in for a share, now that he had been "secularized" and his civil rights restored. That he did come in for one, and that the revision of the settlement was due to the change in his legal status, is therefore only an inference, but one that bears the mark of fair probability.

On 23 July, 1540, he was in the capital of Piedmont, where Guillaume du Bellay was viceroy. This is attested by a letter from Guillaume Pellicier, bishop of Montpellier and royal ambassador to Venice, who wrote to consult Rabelais concerning the legitimacy of a daughter born at seven months to Philippe Saccus, president of Milan. It is highly probable that Rabelais had been with Guillaume du Bellay for some time before this proof of his presence at Turin; and it ap-

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pears that he was much appreciated by the viceroy and by the court of Turin, not only as a physician—du Bellay was worn out and ill; he had little more than two years to live—but as a humanist. Pellicier's letter shows that Rabelais was very busy at raking together Greek texts and Hebrew and Syriac manuscripts for the new Bibliothèque Royale, now the National Library at Paris, which we believe is still the largest collection of books in the world. Pellicier himself lent a hand in this interesting occupation, and both would appear to have been very happy in their rummagings.

But in the autumn of 1540 Rabelais got in trouble again through his inveterate imprudence in writing letters about public affairs. In this respect Rabelais was too outspoken to be a good diplomat; he misreckoned on the fidelity of a trusted correspondent. Such details as are available come by way of a letter from Boysonné to Guillaume Bigot, who was at Turin with du Bellay. Boysonné writes very guardedly. He learned of the trouble while he was at Paris, during a residence of the royal court; and the only residence of the court at Paris that year which he could have witnessed—his time otherwise being accounted for elsewhere—was from the end of October to 8 November, so the affair doubtless happened in September-October. We have already mentioned the two intriguing factions in the court of Francis I; the liberal faction to which the du Bellays and d'Estissac belonged, and the reac-

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tionaries, headed by the cardinal de Tournon and the chancellor Poyot. Barnabé de Voré was a relative of the du Bellays, and for many years was the trusted agent of Guillaume du Bellay in Germany, working on the diplomatic enterprise of an informal understanding between the German and French Protestants; and when du Bellay left Germany, de Voré remained at Tübingen as a kind of *chargé d'affaires*. This was at the end of August, 1537. He is heard of as still in the full confidence of Guillaume du Bellay as late as August, 1540, when he was in Turin, and du Bellay entrusted him with a letter for another highly-placed colleague in the liberal faction, Anne de Montmorency.

Francis I, whose primary interests were political and not at all *per se* either religious or ecclesiastical, was trying to keep in hand the political loyalty of both factions, now favouring one, and now the other; and between these oscillations the du Bellays and Montmorency sometimes had trouble about holding their credit, and at all times had to keep a sharp eye out against being ambushed somewhere in the rank jungle of intrigue. In this situation, it appears from a letter of Jean du Bellay, reported 17 November by Luther's colleague, Martin Bucer, that de Voré suddenly and secretly went over to the opposition with a project of most odious treachery. Francis I thought of sending an embassy of conciliation to the disaffected Protestant States in Germany—the embassy did in fact go in the

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latter part of October, and made a fine failure—and at the instigation of de Voré, Poyot and de Tournon schemed to have de Voré go along. The idea was that de Voré should trade on the confidence established by his record as agent of du Bellay, lure the refugee French Protestants back into France, where Poyot and de Tournon would gather them in at the frontier and make hay of them. Jean du Bellay somehow got wind of this, and wrote his friends beyond the Rhine to look out for de Voré, and stay where they were.

It was while this piece of excellent rascality was hatching, evidently, that Rabelais wrote his incriminating letter from Turin to de Voré, who was then at Rome. The contents of the letter are not known; but probably Rabelais, in ignorance of de Voré's shift to the reactionary party, passed along some confidential news of German affairs, of which Guillaume du Bellay kept himself always informed after he moved to Turin. De Voré promptly relayed the letter to Paris; it was the second time that Rabelais's fine old friend, the cardinal de Tournon, had caught him red-handed; and as may be seen, the incident was exceedingly embarrassing to both the du Bellays. While not in itself, of course, a capital matter, in the circumstances it carried a great deal of borrowed weight. The credit of the du Bellays suffered severely enough every now and then at best, with no need of any indiscretions to depress it further.

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A letter from Guillaume du Bellay, at Turin, 4 January, 1541, says that he is cut off from any news of the court, and that he will cease sending the king any information about Germany. Rabelais had come up into France from Italy in December, 1540, uncertain what to do or which way to turn, Guillaume du Bellay being at the moment thus practically ostracized, and unable to do anything for him. He lingered at Chambéry during the week 12-19 December, perhaps thinking it the part of wisdom to remain close to the frontier. It is probable that he then struck out for Paris or St.-Maur for the next two months, some turn of affairs evidently pointing to that course as advisable. In fact, Jean du Bellay was somehow resourceful enough to get back into the king's good graces, persuade him to send a new embassy to Germany, and also, probably, get him to extricate Rabelais from his invidious position. This last should not have been difficult; the chief difficulty would be to make Francis I keep his mind on the matter long enough to attend to it. However the difficulty was settled, it seems somehow to have come out all right, for by March, 1541, Rabelais was able to resume his former position with Guillaume du Bellay at the court of Turin.

He remained there most of the year. At the beginning of November, Guillaume du Bellay went up into France to talk over Italian affairs with the king, something special having no doubt turned up in the course

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of the incessant shuffling and intrigue that marked the Franco-Spanish rivalry in the Italian States. He took Rabelais with him; his illness was progressing upon him, he was suffering from a fever complicated by gout, and the prospect of a change from Piedmont air to the winter climate of Paris made him apprehensive. He also took along a friend of Rabelais, Étienne Lorens, seigneur de St.-Ayl, esquire and man-at-arms, captain of the citadel of Turin, who had done various diplomatic errands for du Bellay at one time and another, and had but lately bought the property of St.-Ayl, between Orléans and Meung, on the river Loire. Having finished his business with the king, du Bellay received a decoration, 4 December, and what was much more valuable, he got permission to retire for a rest, or rather for an intensive struggle with his failing health. St.-Ayl profited by this occasion to visit his cherished estate, and Rabelais went with him as his guest.

Rabelais's spirits rose at once. After the fraying hardships of travel and the disagreeable uncertainties brought upon him by his letter to de Voré, he was delighted by the chance to pull himself together again on the quiet countryside, in the enjoyment of a luxurious and charming hospitality. A letter from him, or rather the copy of one, is extant, written at this period to his friend the Orléans barrister, Antoine Hullot, who had succeeded Antoine Rabelais

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Letter "to the bailiff of the bailiffs."

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in 1534 as lawyer for the Loire boatmen in the process against Ste.-Marthe, Rabelais addresses him humorously as "the bailiff of the bailiff of the bailiffs, in Christendom, at Orléans," and plies him with immense exuberance of sparkling fun. "If the goodness of God should inspire your Paternity to shift your base so far as to this retreat, you would have great tales to tell us [of a journey to Paris that Hullot seems just to have made]. Moreover, the lord of this establishment would give you certain carp-like fish that pull one another by the hair." His letter seems full of joyous contentment, high spirits, and of gratitude to "a great, kind, pitying God, who never created Lent, but who did create salads, herrings, codfish, carp, pike, dace, grayling, bleak, sticklebacks, also good wines, especially that . . . which is stored here against your arrival like a Holy Grail, a second, nay, a fifth essence." In a postscript, he sends his compliments to three rather interesting friends, all of them humanists, one of them at least, probably, with a leaning towards Protestantism; François Daniel, bailiff of the priory of St.-Laurent-des-Orgerils in 1533, was a great friend of Calvin in his student days, and through life.

In April, Rabelais was once more on his way to Turin with Guillaume du Bellay, arriving 12 May. They stopped over at Lyons, and travelled slowly, presumably on account of du Bellay's health, which was now very frail. It may have been about this time

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that the publisher Juste brought out the new and revised issue of the First and Second Books. Rabelais's modifications of his text were very carefully made. He was now an important man, politically, professionally, and socially. As master of requests, lecturer at Montpellier, physician to the viceroy of Piedmont, attached to the court of Turin, he had every desire not to embroil his patrons and protectors more than he had already unwittingly done on two occasions. Ten years earlier, the Sorbonne and its theologians had been fair game for satire in court circles, but ten years of politics bring their changes. Rabelais therefore, apparently to avoid embarrassing his friends, made the alterations that we have already mentioned. M. Villey has made an interesting analysis of these alterations; he enumerates fifty-five suppressions in the two Books. In the *Pantagruel*, twenty-three out of thirty-two were allusions to holy matters and personages, like the *capharderie* that we mentioned; in the fifteenth chapter he changed several allusions to God and the Virgin, and here and there some references to the Scriptures, but not many. In the *Gargantua*, on the other hand, twenty out of twenty-three suppressions were of direct thrusts at the Sorbonne. The work was not edited "to hurt," and one might almost wonder, if so few and slight changes answered his purpose, why he should have thought it worth while to make any, especially since no one would be for a moment taken

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in by his substitutionary use of purely conventional terms like *sophist* and *sophistry*. If he had been acting from strict motives of prudence, it would seem that he might have hauled in his horns a little further; but as it was, he apparently contented himself with keeping to the absolute minimum necessary to clear his friends.[1] It is noteworthy that in this revision he throws the first stone into the garden of the Calvinists. He had probably begun to hear how things were going at Geneva under Calvin's amiable régime which had now been in force six years; and in the prologue to the Second Book, in the clause reading "let them be accounted abusers, impostors, and seducers of the people," he inserted the word "predestinators."

An annoying embarrassment immediately arose. Rabelais's old friend, the publisher Étienne Dolet, without authorization at once reprinted the "unexpurgated edition" of the First and Second Book, and put it on the market. Why he did this is not known; probably his motive was purely commercial. His edition was very handsome, superior to those previously published, and was undoubtedly brought out to be sold at a good price. Very likely he did not know of the

[1] It is not necessary to doubt that Rabelais kept a Gallic weather-eye out on the main chance throughout his life. We should dislike to refine this Gallicism out of him, even if evidence obliged us to do so; he is much more congenial and interesting with it than without it. But in the present instance it seems not to appear. Moreover, in everything that is known of Rabelais, it seems to have consisted perfectly with a most generous disposition towards his friends and a lively and loyal concern for their interests.

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contemplated revision of 1542, and used the 1537 copy which he had on hand, title-page and all, to print from. This misadventure was the end of friendship; no more affectionate and complimentary Latin elegiacs ever passed between the two. Towards the end of 1542, Pierre de Tours, who had succeeded to the business of Juste, Rabelais's publisher, got out a four-page leaflet, accusing Dolet of theft and plagiarism on the sheets of the 1542 edition—which seems quite untrue; it is utterly improbable that Dolet had anything but the 1537 issue to follow—and further accusing him of making compromising alterations in the text. He sought by this, apparently, to hold Dolet responsible, in the eyes of an unthinking public, for the terms and allusions which had appeared in previous issues, and which Rabelais edited out of the issue of 1542. This leaflet was attached to the unsold copies of the 1542 edition, and presently another edition appeared at Lyons, either pirated or put out anonymously by de Tours himself, which incorporated the leaflet as an address to the reader. The leaflet was too badly written to have been done by Rabelais; it was purely a weapon of commercial warfare, and one dislikes to think that he even connived at its use. There is no reason to think he did, and there are two reasonable grounds for suspecting he did not. First, he was in Turin all the latter half of 1542, and the leaflet did not appear until late in the year. Second, by all knowledge and testimony, Ra-

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belais seems to have been much more unforgiving than he was vindictive. One of his temperament and his special turn of philosophy would be expected rather to have nothing more to do with a person who had offended him than to take occasion for revenge or injury. The character that he gives Pantagruel in this respect is so sound that one would think he must have sought to make it his own:

> Pantagruel . . . never vexed nor disquieted himself with the least pretense of dislike to anything, because he knew that he must have most grossly abandoned the divine mansion of reason if he had permitted his mind to be never so little grieved, afflicted or altered on any occasion whatsoever. For all the goods that the heaven covereth and that the earth containeth, in all their dimensions of height, depth, breadth and length, are not of so much worth as that we should for them disturb or disorder our affections, trouble or perplex our senses or spirits.

Rabelais was always being annoyed by literary piracy, plagiarism, and imitation, in addition to having his works persistently nagged for signs of heresy. He finally sought copyright, an unusual thing at that time; copyright was established only by special royal warrant, and was not easy to get. Francis I gave him a warrant in 1545, "being desirous that good letters be promoted through our kingdom, to the profit and instruction of our subjects," copyrighting "two volumes of the *Heroic Deeds and Sayings of Pantagruel*, not less useful than

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delectable," and also the Third Book, then about to appear. The warrant makes the interesting statement about Rabelais's long silence, that printers have "in several places corrupted and perverted the said books, to the great displeasure and detriment of the aforesaid petitioner, and the prejudice of the readers, inasmuch as for this reason he hath abstained from the publication of the remainder and continuation of the said *Heroic Deeds and Sayings*," for which he had been "daily importuned by the learned and studious people in our kingdom." All this is rather more than the stereotyped formula of an official document. Odet, cardinal de Châtillon, to whom Rabelais dedicated his Fourth Book, attended to getting a second copyright for him in 1550; and in his dedicatory letter, Rabelais recalled de Châtillon's having told him "that King Francis, of eternal memory, had been made sensible of those false accusations; and that having caused my books . . . to be carefully and distinctly read to him by the most learned and faithful reader in this kingdom [this was Pierre du Chastel, bishop of Tulle, official reader to the king] he had not found any passage suspicious. . . . As much was done by his son, our most gracious, virtuous and blessed sovereign, Henry." In this letter, too, Rabelais acknowledges that "the calumny of certain cannibals, misanthropes, perpetual eaves-droppers, has been so foul and excessive against me that it had conquered my patience, and I had resolved not to

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write one jot more." Whether, indeed, he would have written more or faster but for these antagonisms, we regard as most doubtful. We do not think he would; his life was too interesting, and he was too busy making the most of it; but certainly the calumny that he complains of was no encouragement.

VI

On 12 May, 1542, Guillaume du Bellay, sieur de Langey, none too much benefited by his furlough, arrived in Turin, accompanied by Rabelais, to take up his duties again. His health now rapidly failed. On 13 November he made his will, leaving Rabelais an annuity of fifty livres, to be continued up to the time when he should have got a benefice worth 300 livres. This seems a small amount. The will is lost, and its terms are known only through a copy; and in a letter from a relative, Martin du Bellay, the bequest is stated as of 150 livres instead of fifty; so there may have been a copyist's error in the figures. It is uncertain whether or not Rabelais ever realized on this bequest, for the sieur de Langey left considerable debts. Perhaps the benefice materialized in his presentation to the curacy of St.-Christophe-de-Jambet, in the diocese of Mans, for successively Guillaume, René, and Jean du Bellay were bishops of Mans; the diocese seems to have been a kind of standing perquisite in the family.

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Rabelais is known to have been presented to this benefice and to that of St.-Martin-de-Meudon, early in January, 1551, and to have resigned both exactly two years later; and as both were in the gift of Jean du Bellay, it seems possible that they were given either to release the annuity, if Rabelais had ever got it, or to "square" it if he had not.

About a month after making his will, the sieur de Langey, feeling mortal illness upon him, obtained the royal leave, and set out to end his days in France, with Rabelais and a numerous escort of friends and servants accompanying him. It was a most audacious and desperate undertaking for a dying man to attempt the Mont-Cenis route in mid-December. M. Clouzot quotes a pilgrim's account of a passage by that route in 1518, in the month of November, as showing how it may have fared with du Bellay and Rabelais twenty-five years later:

> Early in the morning, 24 November, we each took a mule or a strong horse, to make the ascent of Mont-Cenis. Our servants led the horses, and both they and we suffered a good deal from the driving snow. We could have made no progress if there had not been some to break a path. . . . When we came to the lodge [at the top of the mountain] we found a cardinal who was on his way to Rome; he had at least a hundred or a hundred and twenty horses in his convoy, and they were a sorry spectacle, as the snow had frozen over their eyes, so that they could not see at all. Some of the men wore goggles, and others had fashioned the

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stuff of their caps into a sort of mask, which gave them a very strange appearance. We were only about sixteen in number; and if we had met them either earlier or later by half a league, I believe a good part of us would have perished of cold; for as I have said, the rule of the road is that the smaller convoy draws aside and waits to let the larger pass, it being thought better that twenty should perish rather than a hundred. We ourselves encountered several parties of three or four, who were thus obliged to give us the right of way; I was sorry for them, for their horses were up to their bellies in snow. . . . There was such a force of wind that I thought everything was at an end; my eyeballs seemed pierced by the snow; I could not hold my footing, and feeling that the wind was carrying me off, I dropped down sitting, and still it moved me on. I was on so steep a place that I believe God must have given me great succour. While I was thus terrified, a guide who had seen me fall came up and told me to check myself if I did not wish to be lost. I could do nothing more, and as my horse was so overcome with cold as to be of no use to me, I abandoned him. . . . The guide made me sit on a sledge, which was only a bunch of brush bound together with a rope, which the guide held by one end; he had an iron-shod staff to aid him. . . . Going down a steep place, I slid off, and letting go the tow-line to which I was clinging, I rolled more than ten feet; no one could believe I escaped destruction, for I was on the edge of an abyss over six hundred feet deep . . . my guide put me back on the sledge, half dead.

Guillaume du Bellay survived the worst of the terrible journey, but did not live to reach home. He died

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9 January, at St.-Symphorien, near Tarare, between Lyons and Roanne. His body was embalmed by Rabelais and another physician, Gabriel Taphenon, whom Rabelais speaks of in the twenty-seventh chapter of the Fourth Book, as "master Gabriel, physician of Savillan," and carried on for burial in the cathedral of le Mans, where the obsequies took place 5 March, 1543. Mr. Smith cites the extracts made by Heulhard from the *procès-verbal* of the exhumation of a coffin found at the entrance of the cathedral choir more than three hundred years afterward, in 1862, which seem to show that the body enclosed was that of du Bellay. It was of gigantic stature, in excellent preservation, and the face "exactly resembled that of the stone figure in the mausoleum."

He had been a great friend to Rabelais, a staunch protector, and a generous patron. Rabelais felt his loss. In the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh chapters of the Fourth Book, published nine years later, when things were not going so well either with France or with himself, Rabelais looks back at certain natural prodigies and portents that seem to have occurred at the time of du Bellay's death. Francis I was now dead, and the sorry consequences of his policies were being rapidly harvested. There was something in those sinister phenomena; while du Bellay lived, "France enjoyed so much happiness that all the world looked upon it with envy, sought friendship with it, and stood in

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awe of its power; but now, after his decease, it hath for a considerable time been the scorn of the rest of the world."

VII

The first months of 1543 brought a succession of depressing events. On 2 March, the Faculty of Theology promulgated a list of proscribed books, on which figured the *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*. This was, of course, to be expected; the Sorbonne was no more taken in than any one else was, by the suppressions and modifications made in 1542. Rabelais was safe enough, even though the tide of reaction was rising; he was sheltered from harm, but that was all. There was less and less room for the non-partisan Thelemite in either the world of affairs or the world of thought. The great exemplars of "the good life," Erasmus and Budé, had been taken away from the evil to come, Erasmus in 1536 and Budé in 1540. Rabelais began to feel the sense of isolation and insecurity increasing upon him as public affairs ran more and more rapidly up to a crisis, and as the energumens of each politico-religious faction began more and more to regard everyone who was not with them as against them. All Rabelais had to keep him out of this bear's den or snake-pit was the affectionate and understanding good-will of a few humanist-official protectors, so few that he could count them on

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the fingers of one hand—Marguerite of Navarre, Jean du Bellay, d'Estissac, de Châtillon, St.-Ayl—and no one knew at what moment some untoward turn of politics would destroy their influence, and leave him naked to the *odium theologicum* of a ruffled Sorbonne and a ruffled Protestantism, alike ignorant, alike vindictive. Now, too, Guillaume du Bellay had gone, and within a few weeks d'Estissac was to go; he died, 30 May. Louis d'Estissac continued to provide for Rabelais—there was no trouble about that—and he seems to have thought as much of him as his uncle did, but he was not the man his uncle was.

This year, 1543, also marks the publication of a book by Guillaume Postel, in which M. Lefranc has lately discovered the most violent and direct attack ever made on Rabelais, probably, except the one by de Puy-Herbault in 1549, and those made intermittently by Calvin from 1543 on, culminating in a volcanic blast of condemnation in 1550. It is interesting to observe the angle of incidence of these three attacks; one sees there so clearly how, in a great irruption of partisanship, prejudice, self-interest, and doctrinaire sectarianism, there is nowhere any room for the humanist; probably the only point of common agreement is in repudiating him, probably the only course of strict emulation is by way of seeing which can best misunderstand him and most elaborately vilify him. Postel attacks Rabelais as a friend of Protestantism, a fautor of the Reformation.

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The Protestant reformer Calvin attacks him as atheist, materialist, rationalist. Gabriel de Puy-Herbault attacks him somewhat as the late Mr. Anthony Comstock might have done, as a man of sin, "the most implacable enemy" of decency and virtue, "the impure and contaminated man, who has so much wit and so little reason." Obviously, a ground raked by cross-fire like this affords no cover.

There is an interesting fact connected with the attack directed against Rabelais by the outraged precisianism of de Puy-Herbault. A letter written by Charles de Ste.-Marthe, and published in 1550, expresses the warmest approbation of de Puy-Herbault's work. This Charles de Ste.-Marthe was one of the most highly cultivated spirits of Marguerite's court, a very enlightened man, to all appearance the exact opposite of such a reactionary as de Puy-Herbault. One cannot help being taken a bit aback to find him going out of his way to stiffen de Puy-Herbault's elbow against "those atheists and those Epicureans, the latter of whom you specify by name," and adding that he himself hopes to aid in this noble crusade against impious indecency.

But one at once notices that Rabelais is the only one of these "Epicureans" whom de Puy-Herbault mentions by name; and one notices too that Charles de Ste.-Marthe, besides being a most accomplished man, was also the second son of Gaucher de Ste.-Marthe, physician, local magnate in the Chinonais, whom the reader

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recognizes immediately as his enterprising old friend of the fish-weir in the Loire. M. Lefranc took the trouble to burrow into his history a little, and made the discovery that de Puy-Herbault was a monk at Fontevrault when the elder de Ste.-Marthe lived there as resident physician to the abbess of Fontevrault and her tenants at Lerné. Evidently the family never forgave Rabelais his portrait of Picrochole; evidently fifteen years after the Picrocholine War their enmity was still bitter, and the second son of Gaucher de Ste.-Marthe still thought it worth while to make a display of resentment, even in a small way. *Tantæne animis?* M. Plattard, however, makes the extenuating suggestion, which we think very just, of a further motive on the part of de Ste.-Marthe for associating himself thus publicly with de Puy-Herbault's tirade. Having been in prison as a Lutheran in 1543, he may have seen a good chance to avert further suspicion from himself at Rabelais's expense, thus killing two birds with one stone. Moreover, as an ardent Platonist and a friend of Marguerite, he was strong on the side of feminism; and as we have mentioned, after the publication of the Third Book, Rabelais's enemies made a good deal of capital out of representing him as an anti-feminist of the first magnitude.

Rabelais noticed the attack, and three years later, in the thirty-second chapter of the Fourth Book, gave him a contemptuous word, a play on his name, which

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the Elizabethan translators render "herb-stinking hermits." In this sentence Rabelais lumps off all three categories of those who were attacking him out of interested motives. This may be made clearer by varying the Elizabethan translation a little, to make the passage read: "Since that time, she [Antiphysis] begot the hypocritical tribes of eavesdropping dissemblers, superstitious pope-mongers and priest-ridden bigots, . . . the demoniac Calvins, impostors of Geneva, the raving *Put-Herbes* ["herb-stinkers," a play on the name *puy-Herbault*] . . . and many more other deformed and ill-favoured monsters, made in spite of Nature."

From the middle of 1543 to the end of 1545, practically nothing is known about Rabelais's life. The only recorded incident is the granting of his copyright, 19 September, 1545, probably by intervention of Marguerite of Navarre. One may suppose that in this period Rabelais was more or less kept at court in virtue of his office as master of requests. Perhaps he stayed at St.-Maur with the cardinal Jean du Bellay, whose château was being completed under the architectural direction of Philibert de l'Orme—one may hardly say completed, for the magnificent plans could not be carried out; it was the old story of serious underestimating, forever being rehearsed at the expense of architects. But so much of the building as was finished at all, was made ready for occupancy in the summer of 1544; doubtless the dedication and housewarming took

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place between 7 July and 4 August, when Francis I remained almost continuously at St.-Maur. At this period, then, Rabelais might have had the double advantage of being with the court and with his protector. Some of the time he may have been with Louis d'Estissac; perhaps also at St.-Ayl, since the letter written from there "to the bailiff of the bailiff of the bailiffs" can be dated 1544 or 1545 as well as 1542. It seems almost certain also that during this period he made his visit to his beloved islands of Hyères, though no one can guess how long he stayed there. On the title-page of the Third Book, published probably early in January, 1546, Rabelais for the first time acknowledges authorship, styling himself "doctor of medicine, and calloïer [*caloyer*, i. e., patriarch] of the Isles of d'Hyères," and in the fiftieth chapter—though it is not in the English text—he speaks affectionately of "my islands of Hyères, formerly called Stœchades." Wherever he may have been during this entire period, however, and whatever he may have been doing, there is no reason to suspect otherwise than that he was comfortable, contented, and as happy as anyone could be, considering the general circumstances of the time. Doubtless during this period he was engaged more or less regularly on the composition of the Third Book, and no more delightful occupation than that could be imagined.

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Chapter Seven

THE Third Book presents great differences from the first two. It seems to have been composed less hurriedly and more thoughtfully, though the same old delightful structural inconsistencies are still present in it. It is a continuation of the story of Pantagruel, beginning geographically where the Second Book left off, in the mythical and distant land of the Dipsodes, which Pantagruel had conquered; then after a few chapters it wanders unaccountably back to France again, and presently finds itself once more at home in the Touraine. In the sixteenth chapter, Pantagruel advises Panurge to consult with a famous sorceress, a counterpart of the witch of Endor, the sibyl of Panzoult, near Crouly, some seven miles east of Chinon, where her tradition still survives, and where a cavern in some rocks is still pointed out as her residence. As the next chapter states that Panurge took no more than a three-days' journey to reach Panzoult, his *terminus a quo* could hardly have been as far distant as Utopia or the land of the Dipsodes, but rather somewhere in France.

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Another inconsistency that the reader is now well trained to look for is the divesting of Pantagruel of his gigantic attributes. But in this, too, the Third Book is peculiar; in the Second Book, Pantagruel is of normal stature only part of the time, while in the Third Book he is of normal stature all the time. There is nothing anywhere to recall either the proportions or the prowess of the giant. Pantagruel fights no battles, engages in no feats of strength, performs no heroic deeds. This is particularly amusing when one remembers, as no doubt some of his readers did, the extravagant promises that the author made when he took leave of them after they had "heard a beginning of the horrific history of my lord and master Pantagruel," in the Second Book. Those who bought the Third Book in hope of seeing "how Panurge was married, and made a cuckold within a month after his wedding"; how Pantagruel crossed the Caspian mountains, fought the cannibals, descended into hell, and all the rest of it, were royally sold. Nor does Pantagruel give evidence of more than mortal intellect; he no longer digests a whole armful of books at a night's sitting, as he did on the eve of the disputation with Thaumast. He is a wise, able, kindly, and tolerant man; he has preserved those characteristics of his gianthood, but those are all. As for the original Pantagruel, the thirst-producing demon who used to appear incidentally or by allusion once in a while, he is now completely

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lost; there is no hint of him until one reaches the long enigma of the pantagruelion at the end of the book, and then the hint, when one gets it, is allegorical and very remote.

We were never able quite to keep step with the conventional literary criticism that insists on seeing deliberate personification on every page that an author writes. When we are told, therefore, that one of Rabelais's characters "represents" this-or-that quality or abstraction, we find our footsteps lagging much as they did of old when critics of an earlier day insisted that they represented persons; that Grangousier represented Francis I, for instance, and Picrochole Charles V. It is hard for us to regard Rabelais's work as quite so mechanically allegorical. We are reminded of Goethe's saying that "man never knows how anthropomorphic he is"; and we wonder whether criticism always knows how pedantic it can be in reconstructing an author's intentions after its own image. In the Third Book, we are lately told, Pantagruel represents knowledge—vast knowledge—put to the service of reason; and that Panurge represents erudition and quick intelligence debased by low instincts, and that Panurge is therefore the hero of the book, since the story itself also combines popular and erudite elements. This is all very well, but there seems a kind of odour of master Janotus about it, very faint perhaps, but unmistakable; or of Gargantua proving on his finger-ends to his

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mother that *de modis significandi non erat scientia.* "'Tis to reason too curiously to reason so"; we wish we might be quite sure that Rabelais would recognize his own intentions. But the innovations, both in structure and method, that appear in the Third Book have opened the way for no end of criticism of this type; and no end of it, accordingly, has been supplied.

So much, indeed, that to keep from being quite run away with, we have been obliged to say to ourselves again and again and yet again, *Rabelais is a story-teller!* Humanist he was, scholar he was, physician, man of the world, diplomat, stylist; all these he was, and the mark of all these qualities is upon his work. But when he took up his pen, we repeat, the thing that interested him, the thing he aimed at first and last, was a great story told in a great way, a way that should transcend entirely the way of all the story-tellers who were before him, from whose substance he borrowed with such magnificent freedom, and that should reduce to a fascinated despair all the story-tellers who should come after him. Everything else was subordinate to this. Satire came in, learning came in, "grossness" came in—what did not come in?—his work is an extraordinary mosaic, a miscellany of nearly everything known or knowable in his time. But the direct primary challenge thrown down to him by a piece of blank paper was never a challenge to satire, to pedantry, to "grossness," or to anything but the girding up of his

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mighty loins for the production of a great story in a great style. Therefore we think that the reader who hopes to gain a true feeling for his author cannot too stoutly resist the usurpation of fancifulness, or too resolutely defend himself against the application of modern sentimentality to any of the ceremonies of critical introduction.

II

Most especially at this juncture, then, with the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Books in view—that enormous field which criticism of a transcendental, partial, and more or less obscurantist type has found always so inviting—we say to the reader: Never forget, never for a moment lose sight of our fundamental proposition, *Rabelais is a story-teller.* Before attempting to analyze somewhat the structure of the Third Book, we think it might be appropriate to examine and illustrate his leading qualities as a story-teller, because it is important that the reader should be thoroughly penetrated by a sense of them. They are five in number. In the first place, Rabelais is extremely rapid; second, he has the momentum of great mass; third, he is essentially direct in his ideas; fourth, he is essentially informal and direct in his diction—he is conversational without triviality, always giving the sense of the spoken word, and therefore always best read if read aloud;

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and finally, he is consistently objective, the "moral elevation" which Coleridge remarked of him is always sustained.

First, then, Rabelais is rapid. His thought is never involved, never slackly turning around on itself. One thing runs off into another without digression and at high speed. Each of his sentences says a straight sentence-worth and then runs off swiftly into the next. Nor is his swiftness uneven and jerky, with the movement that the French call *saccadé;* his sentences and clauses are usually long, but they never drag, they are always pressing swiftly and smoothly forward, carrying the reader with them. By way of illustration, we may cite Epistemon's résumé in a single sentence of "the moral comedy of him who had espoused and married a dumb wife"; it occurs in the thirty-fourth chapter of the Third Book:

> The good honest man, her husband, was very earnestly urgent to have the fillet of her tongue untied, and would needs have her speak by any means; at his desire, some pains were taken on her, and partly by the industry of the physician, other part by the expertness of the surgeon, the encycliglotte which she had under her tongue being cut, she spoke and spoke again: yea, within few hours she spoke so loud, so fiercely and so long that her poor husband returned to the same physician for a recipe to make her hold her peace.

Mark the length of that sentence; there are ninety-eight words in it; yet see how swiftly and smoothly it

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keeps driving forward, how straight and level the track over which it runs. Here one observes, too, in the second place, that Rabelais's speed is not that of the delicately balanced and graceful skater; it is the speed of the heavy express train, giving off an impressive suggestion of great mass and momentum. No weight of words seems able to slacken it, not even the huge polysyllabic monstrosities that he manufactures and throws in every now and then in deference to the conventions of popular farce. He carries the heavy load of Panurge's reflections on the dying poet Raminagrobis, in the twenty-second chapter, as easily and swiftly as he does the story of the dumb wife:

> Panurge, at his issuing forth of Raminagrobis's chamber, said as if he had been horribly affrighted, 'By the virtue of God, I believe he is a heretic; the devil take me if I do not; he doth so villainously rail at the mendicant friars and jacobins, who are the two hemispheres of the Christian world; by whose gyronomonic circumbilivaginations, as by two celivagous filopendulums, all the autonomatic metagrabolism of the Romish Church, when tottering and emblustricated with the gibble-gabble-gibberish of this odious error and heresy, is homocentrically poised. But what harm, in the devil's name, have those poor wretches, the capuchins and minims, done unto him? Are not those beggarly devils sufficiently wretched already? Who can imagine that these poor snakes, the very extracts of icthyophagy, are not thoroughly enough besmoaked and besmeared with misery, distress and calamity? Dost thou think, friar John, by thy faith, that he is in the state of salvation?

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He goeth, before God, as surely damned to thirty thousand basketsful of devils, as a pruning-bill to the lopping of a vine-branch.'

The quality we are now dwelling on, the force of mass and momentum, is much more effectively apprehended in the art of a master than through the prose of a critic. We therefore ask the reader to do something that will give both himself and us a happy escape from plodding through a good many words of more or less ineffectual exposition of a characteristic that he can much more satisfactorily take in for himself. Let him study the foregoing passage, carefully fixing in his mind the rhythm and accent of each sentence, like an actor studying a part; and then let him declaim it to himself. If he will do this, he is bound to get the point that we are making; he cannot help getting it, and far better than by any aid that we could give him. In fact, a very short devotion to this exercise here and there in one's general reading of Rabelais will presently be found to settle into a habit; one finds oneself instinctively declaiming him; and there is no other way so good for maintaining an adequate appreciation of his literary qualities in general, and of this one in particular.

It will not do, moreover, to say that in the feeling induced by this exercise, Rabelais is getting the adventitious aid of the matchless English prose of the seventeenth century, and hence making his way upon

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The Death of Raminagrobis
Book III, Ch. 22.

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the reader's sensibilities on borrowed credit. The reader may make comparison with the original in any passage he likes, and he will find that the translation gives him, not always the same thing, but always the corresponding thing, the thing necessary to reproduce upon an English reader the total impression produced upon a French reader by the original. The translators are sometimes unfaithful to literalness, but never to Rabelais. After all the hard things we have been saying about Mr. Smith's little failures in literary tact, it is a great pleasure now to say how much he rejoices us by his remark that "Rabelais's style, when translated quite literally, lends itself readily to a translation of that kind [that is, into idiomatic English] something in the nature of the English adopted by the translators of our Bible." Naturally so, and for the same reason; even here, Mr. Smith is perhaps not quite clear and explicit enough, he does not put his finger quite firmly enough upon what he sees. Rabelais anticipated the need of a competent French prose, exactly as the King James translators anticipated that of a competent English prose; like them, too, he did much to focus that sense and make it effective. As nationalism developed, as peoples speaking somewhat the same tongue drew together into large centralized political units and their language became increasingly standardized, as printing came into use and Latin gave way to the vernacular, there presently developed the im-

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perious need for a competent prose. This need began to be generally felt in England about half a century after the King James translators had finished their work; in France, somewhat later. The first effort made in England to construct such a prose, anticipatory as it was, remains unapproached in point of achievement; but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries almost everybody would seem to have been able to manage a competent prose with ease; and even today, in the progressive degeneration that set in upon our prose in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the vestiges of a good prose still seem more or less a popular property in England. Owing largely to the salutary despotism of the Academy, a good prose is now probably much more a popular property in France than in England; but the development of French prose followed the same general course as that of English prose, and Rabelais stood in the same anticipatory relation towards it as the King James translators stood towards the corresponding development in England.

Thirdly, Rabelais is essentially simple and direct in his ideas. His ideas are greatly elaborated, though every elaboration gets them forward, presses them rapidly on, none is content to coruscate around a pivot, like a pinwheel; but the ideas themselves are never pseudo-ideas, almost never abstract, and never recondite or involved. An excellent example is found in the long discussion of Panurge's wastefulness, in chapters II–VI

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of the Third Book. One would say that elaboration could go no farther, though there is no dragging, every period goes on swiftly and smoothly to its end; yet the central thesis or idea is the very simple one established by common observation, that all humanity lives in a state of mutual dependence—the idea that St. Paul presents in his allegory of the body and the members. Like all the humanists, Rabelais fought shy of abstractions and logomachies. Believing in Nature and in the return to Nature, the humanists were aware that Nature's operations, august as they might be, were yet simple; that Nature's regulatory laws, while utterly incomprehensible in their why and wherefore by any mind, were yet apprehensible for practical purposes of obedience by almost the meanest intellect. Besides this, the Schoolmen had bequeathed to the world of the Renaissance an abundant sufficiency of sterile abstractions and fruitless metaphysics. The humanists especially regarded the mediæval world of theology and philosophy as having "lived upon air and empty nothings," as Jeremy Taylor finely says; "falling out about nothings, and being very wise about things that are not, and work not." Rabelais had been fed to the full on academic discussion of the number of angels that could stand together on the point of a needle; he was for driving at practice, and letting all that sort of thing go by the board as nugatory and preposterous. Among the books in the catalogue of

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the library of St.-Victor, he mentions a dissertation on the question, "whether a chimæra buzzing in a vacuum could devour second intentions"; and in the Lyons edition published after his death, in 1558, there is interpolated in the Second Book a list of eleven similar theses, under the heading, "The Philosophical Cream of the Encyclopædic Questions of Pantagruel: which will be sorbonicolificabilitudinissily discussed in the Schools of Decree, near St.-Denis-de-la-Chartre at Paris." We quote one or two:

> Whether a Platonic Idea, bounding to the right under the orifice of chaos, could drive away the squadrons of the atoms of Democritus.
>
> Whether the atoms, whirling to the sound of the hermagoric harmony, could make a compaction or a dissolution of a quintessence by the subtraction of the Pythagorean numbers.
>
> Whether the hibernal frigidity of the antipodes, passing in an orthagonal line through the homogeneous solidity of the centre, could by a gentle antiperistasis warm the superficial connexity of our heels.

In their application of strong common sense to the task of discriminating between the essential and the non-essential in theology and philosophy, the humanists had much in common with the mystics, and like the mystics, they have been much misunderstood and disparaged in consequence; the mystics for a vague faith in moonshine, and the humanists for a cultivated inaction and indifference, marking them as mere Gallios.

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In fact, however, there is no more hard-headed good sense, no more direct appeal to the evidential value of practice and experience, in any school of religious thought than in that of mysticism. Erasmus and Rabelais would heartily have subscribed to the theology and teleology set forth by John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist of the seventeenth century:

> Where we find wisdom, justice, loveliness, goodness, love and glory in their highest elevations and most unbounded dimensions, that is He; and where we find any true participations of these, there is a true communication of God; and a defection from these is the essence of sin and the foundation of hell.

Such is the theology discernible behind Gargantua's admonition to Pantagruel, in the eighth chapter of the Second Book, that "'it behoveth thee to serve, to love, to fear God, and on him to cast all thy thoughts and all thy hope, and by faith formed in love to cleave unto him, so that thou mayest never be separated from him by thy sins.'" The humanist was invincibly suspicious of a more highly organized and speculative theology, whether emanating from Augustine or from Calvin; it tended too far beyond what was practical and necessary. They would have united in unfeigned praise of the common sense of another mystical writer, Thomas Wilson, for fifty-eight years bishop of Sodor and Man, who declared that "since the practical truths of the Gospel are plain, no Christian need complain

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of want of light." Moreover, an unchecked license of speculation and affirmation breeds controversy, and controversy breeds hatred, and the humanists were keenly aware that hatred is essentially irreligious. Who had ever greater occasion than the humanists of this period to agree with the golden sentence of another English mystic, Whichcote, that "nothing is worse done than what is ill done for religion. That must not be done in defence of religion which is contrary to religion"? All the spirit of the humanists, again, was in the hard good sense of the author of the *Imitation*, who so pertinently asks, "What does it avail to dispute and discourse high concerning the Trinity, and lack humility, and so displease the Trinity?"

Fourthly, Rabelais is not only simple and direct in his ideas, but he is also informal and direct, even conversational, in his diction. We have said a good deal about this already, so that beyond giving an illustration or two from the Third Book, we need say nothing more; one may find an illustration for oneself in any sentence or paragraph taken at haphazard. In the eighteenth chapter, Panurge tells a story which he introduces informally, almost garrulously, as one that " 'the good friar Arthur Wagtail told me once, upon a Monday morning, as we were (if I have not forgot) eating a bushel of trotter-pies; and I remember well it rained hard; God give him the good-morrow!' " In the next chapter, too, one may see how direct and purely

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informal Rabelais's diction is, when he addresses himself to Panurge's retrospect upon "'what happened at Rome two hundred and threescore years after the foundation thereof'":

> 'A young Roman gentleman encountering by chance, at the foot of Mount Celion, with a beautiful Latin lady named Verona, who from her cradle upwards had always been both deaf and dumb, very civilly asked her (not without a chironomatic Italianising of his demand, with various jectigation of his fingers, and other gesticulations as yet customary amongst the speakers of that country) what senators in her descent from the top of the hill she had met with going up thither. For you are to conceive that he knowing no more of her deafness than dumbness, was ignorant of both. She, in the meantime, who neither heard nor understood so much as one word of what he had said, straight imagined by all that she could apprehend in the lovely gesture of his manual signs, that what he then required of her was what she herself had a great mind to, even that which a young man doth naturally desire of a woman. Then was it that by signs (which in all occurrences of venereal love are incomparably more attractive, valid and efficacious than words) she beckoned to him to come along with her to her house; which when she had done, she drew him aside to a private room, and then made a most lively alluring sign unto him, to show that the game did please her. Whereupon, without any more advertisement, or so much as uttering one word on either side, they fell to and bringuardised it lustily.'

Finally, Rabelais is eminently objective; and of this too, we have already said something. He composes

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"with his eye on the object," never insinuating his own personality between the object and the reader. His personages think, act, and speak in character, and he reports them disinterestedly; he does not undertake to marshal them arbitrarily one way or another. The reader is never, for instance, uncomfortably conscious of a sickly salacity in such matter as the foregoing, or of an effete sanctimoniousness in such passages as the last words of the dying poet to Panurge and his companions. Rabelais's absolute objectivity insures the reader against any sense of violence, disorder, or ineptitude in his quick transition from the finesse of the pregnant nun, sister Fatbum, to the plea of Raminagrobis to be left alone in his last moments to enjoy undisturbed " 'those sweet thoughts wherein I was already beginning to repose myself, and acquiesce in the contemplation and vision, yea, almost in the very touch and taste of the happiness and felicity which the good God hath prepared for his faithful saints and elect in the other life, and state of immortality.' " After all, the pregnancy of sister Fatbum was an event as strictly in the order of Nature as the death of Raminagrobis, and as such it was to be as objectively regarded, and to be reported in a fashion as appropriate to its circumstances.

So the reader who approaches Rabelais in all seriousness, frankly looking for benefit and profit, such profit to the spirit as but two or three writers can

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give in like viability and measure—the reader, we repeat, should be thoroughly penetrated with a sense of these five qualities. We may go over their recapitulation again; the reader cannot fix them too firmly in his mind. He cannot too often say to himself in his progress with his author, *Rabelais is neither propagandist nor buffoon; he is a story-teller; he writes primarily not for critics or polemists, but for himself and his Christian friends. As a story-teller, he is rapid; he has immense momentum; he is simple and plain in his ideas; he is direct and conversational in his diction; and he is eminently objective.*

III

Rabelais had written the Second Book according to traditional specifications; basically also the First Book, the details being considerably modified. He had done about enough in that traditional formula, so he set out on a new plan of his own. There is a good deal of action in the first two Books, mostly martial; in the Third Book there is no action at all, no fighting, no travel, and hence no descriptive writing. We have said that in the Third Book, Pantagruel is no longer a giant, which is perhaps not strictly accurate. There is nothing in the Third Book for a giant to do—nothing, indeed, for anybody to do but talk—so Pantagruel may have remained a giant or he may not; Rabelais

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simply did not sufficiently share Mr. Witittterly's devotion to "the unities" to labour the point of his being a giant. The structure of the story differs altogether from that of the two preceding. The personages are all full-grown; Rabelais has performed his last accouchement, and brought up his last youngster. He carries on his characters straight from the end of the Second Book, and therein does not in the least mind a good rousing anachronism. Doctor Dryasdust would remind us that Friar John, Eudemon, Gymnast, and Rhizotomos were all contemporaries of Pantagruel's father, Gargantua, and that in sending them out with Pantagruel and Panurge, Rabelais has not accommodated the details of his story to the fact of a generation's difference in their ages. But Rabelais had his own notions of dealing with the "addle-pated coxcomb" who would spoil the flavour of a good story by insisting on a little matter like that, and it is no trouble to imagine what he would say in reply to Dr. Dryasdust's representations.

One scarcely knows what to call the several divisions of the Third Book. One can hardly dignify them by the name of major episodes; what they all really are is extended conversations. The book begins with a brisk sketch of a colonizing enterprise instituted by Pantagruel; he transports and settles in the conquered country of Dipsody a colony of 9,876,543,210 Utopians, from his own native land—the Touraine being for the

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moment relegated to forgetfulness. This is the occasion for a sound and exhaustive dissertation from Rabelais, speaking in the first person, on the duty of a conqueror to a conquered people. It is interesting to remark that Pantagruel's project was dictated by motives of sound mutual advantage to conquerors and conquered. There was no surplus population in Utopia to be got rid of, nor was Dipsody a particularly inviting ground for colonists; the point was that the Utopians thought so much of Pantagruel as a ruler that their disposition and propaganda would be most effective in reconciling the ruffled Dipsodes and inclining them towards Pantagruel's sovereignty, by giving them practical help in the reconstruction of their land and its affairs:

> Remark therefore here, honest drinkers, that the manner of preserving and retaining newly-conquered countries in obedience is not, as hath been the erroneous opinion of some tyrannical spirits, to their own detriment and dishonour, to pillage, plunder, force, spoil, trouble, oppress, vex, disquiet, ruin and destroy the people, ruling, governing and keeping them in awe with rods of iron; and in a word, eating and devouring them.

No, that is the policy of the bear, that rakes down the bee-tree, devours the honey and disperses the bees; the enlightened policy is that of the bee-keeper, who stays on the good side of the bees by constant kindness, encouragement, and help:

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> Thus Osiris, the great king of the Egyptians, conquered almost the whole earth, not so much by force of arms as by easing the people of their troubles, teaching them how to live well and honestly, giving them good laws, and using them with all possible affability, courtesy, gentleness and liberality; therefore was he by all men deservedly entitled the great king Euergetes.

It is a striking and effective presentation of a truly statesmanlike view which has never had general observance, and which modern statesmanship seems peculiarly disqualified for entertaining. It was by such means, continues Rabelais, that—

> Pantagruel of one angel made two, which was a contingency opposite to the counsel of Charlemagne, who made two devils of one, when he transplanted the Saxons into Flanders and the Flemings into Saxony.

When Pantagruel arranged the government of the conquered territory, he appointed Panurge governor of Salmygondin, with a large fixed income, "besides the uncertain revenue of the locusts and periwinkles." Thus Panurge, for the first time in his life, had really a chance to show what he could do; and he acquitted himself so admirably that in fourteen days he had disposed of his whole revenue, certain and uncertain, for three years ahead. This gave rise to the conversation between Pantagruel and Panurge on the general subject of debt; Panurge defending his extravagance in such a way as to introduce the thesis of the mutual

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dependence of the whole human race, which we have already mentioned.

Pantagruel proposes to pay out Panurge's debts and give him a fresh start in the way of commercial integrity; but Panurge finds the thought of being completely out of debt quite insupportable, and begs Pantagruel to leave him at least so much in debt as to keep his mind at peace with itself. Their colloquy is most amusing. Pantagruel is inexorable; Panurge must be out of debt, and stay out; and Panurge, cast down and disconsolate at the prospect of no longer having any creditors to sharpen his wits on, seeing little ahead of him but a sober, righteous and uninteresting life, begins to contemplate in all seriousness the desperate expedient of matrimony.

The next forty chapters are occupied almost exclusively with Panurge's indecision about this enterprise. The last four chapters in the book contain the long, highly scientific enigma of the pantagruelion, and there is also the brief interpolated episode of the trial of Bridlegoose. Panurge's marriage, however, is the principal subject of the book. The theme of the discussion is very simple. Panurge is disposed to marry, but he is held back from marriage by fear that his wife will be unfaithful to him. That is all; and the development of this theme is by way of his consultation with various persons on the question whether, if he marries, his wife will be unfaithful, or if there is

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any possible way known to science or to pseudo-science whereby he can assure himself that she shall not be unfaithful. Among those whom he consults are the poet Raminagrobis; the astrologer Her Trippa, and the Sibyl of Panzoult; the physician Rondibilis; the philosopher Trouillogan, and the theologian Hippothadeus.

It is easy to see how large a liberty this weak and flexible structural design gave the author for playing with one idea after another, and for loading up his play with unlimited erudition. He could fit almost anything into this framework and elaborate it to any extent he liked. Erudition, indeed, is the characteristic mark of the Third Book. He had already given his readers a fine run in the tradition of folk-lore; he had treated them to some lively animadversions on society and on certain social institutions in which they had an interest; he had created great character for them, and shown them inimitable portraiture; he had given shape to the humanists' theory of education and to their ennobling conception of human liberty. Now he would see what he could do with erudition, and the free play of consciousness upon an idea. Any basic theme would do; Panurge's proposed marriage would furnish everything one could want. In the Third Book, then, the essential thing was that everyone must be erudite; some of his personages would have to show a little inconsistency here, but what of that? Friar

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Panurge consulting the Sibyl of Panzoult
Book III, Ch. 17.

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John, for instance, loses nothing of his old character, but has to take on a sort of deck-load of learning, which he can jettison without any trouble before he appears again in the Fourth Book. To understand this turn of Rabelais's genius, one has but to recall that the revival of learning was such a new thing, so great and so absorbing, that a sight of the mere apparatus of erudition was enough to touch off the humanists' enthusiasm like a spark in gunpowder. Their almost uproarious love of classical citation and allusion, their joy in seeing a thesis shored up by references to chapter and verse of classical authority—in fairness all this seems almost too naïve, spontaneous, and whole-hearted to be called pedantry. The humanist readers of Rabelais in his own day would revel like cats in a bed of valerian over the appalling string of citations in chapters thirty-nine to forty-three of the Third Book, for instance, which report the trial of Bridlegoose. None now, probably, can share this enthusiasm, but one may at least take pains to understand it for the sake of better understanding the master-work that called it forth.

IV

The chapters on Panurge's marriage are what finally established Rabelais's reputation as an anti-feminist; when they appeared in 1546 they caused the old Tiraqueau-Bouchard imbroglio at Fontenay-le-Comte, al-

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most a quarter of a century before, to be raked up, and Rabelais's share in it scrutinized. The reader will perhaps recall from the little précis in our first chapter, that just at this time the feminist controversy was going its strongest, having broken out afresh with great violence four years before, in 1542, with the publication of the *Parfaite Amye* of Antoine Héroët. The subject engrossed the whole literary world as completely, it seems, as the controversy over de Ste.-Marthe's fish-weir had engrossed the whole countryside of the Chinonais; everybody was writing about it; and Rabelais seems to have leaped on it with joy and delight as the very thing he needed to serve as a point of departure for most of his Third Book.

Such, at least, is our view; but we are bound to say that all commentators, even the latest and most learned, think that his relation to the subject was by no means so casual. M. Abel Lefranc, for example, appears to think his interest in it was responsible for the whole array of structural differences that set off the Third Book against the two which precede it. "In brief," he says—

> an author still infinitely appetizing, always learned, always abounding in humour, but dominated by an entirely different set of preoccupations, appears before us. Stricken by the contagion that rested upon thinkers and writers towards 1545, Rabelais's attention was exclusively engaged by the difficult enigmas of marriage and those of the feminine nature; his only thought was

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> of making his own voice heard in the general chorus. This man, whom the mystery of human destiny and human freedom had always so profoundly interested and agitated, now brought the whole of his reflective power to bear upon a particular aspect of this great mystery.

Well, possibly; we cannot contradict it, but we do not believe it. We content ourselves with asking but the one question, Does all that sound like Rabelais? To us, no. It sounds satisfactorily like Tiraqueau, it would answer for Bouchard, it would do very well, in fact, for any of the controversialists that we can think of at the moment; but it will not do for Rabelais. This type of literary criticism seems to us to be always unconsciously identifying a fact with one of the modes of explaining that fact, and thus tending to make them stand or fall together. From the beginning, the literary critic has always, perhaps for the most part unconsciously, been beset and bedevilled by the utterly untoward compulsion to regard Rabelais as primarily a reformer or propagandist or heretic or atheist or free-thinker or sociological theoretician—almost anything, in short, but what he primarily was, a great artist. This is the fixed line of the critic's exegesis, and notwithstanding certain facts may look very ungainly and fantastic when dressed to correspond, it is nevertheless in such garb that they must appear.

If we may adopt Matthew Arnold's sane and far-reaching canon of criticism, "the more reasonable Rabe-

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lais is the true one." No doubt the current controversy suggested the chapters on Panurge's marriage; no doubt, also the parochial rumpus over de Ste.-Marthe's fish-weir suggested the stirring narrative of the Picrocholine War; but to us it seems monstrously improbable that Rabelais had more than a literary interest in either. Tiraqueau, yes; Héroët, yes. One can easily imagine a Héroët of yesterday being jailed for the Twentieth Amendment or marching in a manifestation of the Woman's Party; it is no trouble to imagine a Tiraqueau at the head of some reactionary legislative minority, leading a forlorn hope against ratification. But we cannot possibly begin to imagine Rabelais mustering the faintest interest in feminism or anti-feminism *per se* as represented either in the great sixteenth-century controversy, or in that of the twentieth; neither cause being sound enough, or likely to be fruitful enough, to be worth his serious attention. General society was too far away from the abbey of Thélème for a pin's difference in the triumph of either. Meanwhile, the controversy itself was immensely diverting; in its lack of imagination and humour, its slowness to see when it was making itself ridiculous, it was a fascinating squabble of children. As such, it was a first-rate literary property, suggesting no end of good effects to be got out of it; and that, after all, was the great thing.

M. Lefranc will have but a poor opinion of dissident

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amateurs who, when confronted with his fine periods, keep stubbornly muttering under their breath, *Rabelais was a story-teller;* but in the hardness of our head or heart, we can do no better. All the more diligently do we rehearse our protective formula—"matter of breviary," as Friar John would say—when M. Lefranc finds Rabelais irresistibly turned back by force of inveterate prepossession to his old ground of anti-feminism established at Fontenay. "Now we know why the voyage of Pantagruel and Panurge, promised at the end of the Second Book, was deferred to the Fourth; why Rabelais changed his tone; and why, suddenly reappearing on the stage, he has devoted practically a whole book to the feminist question. In him the spirit of the Franciscan of Fontenay-le-Comte, the friend of Tiraqueau, was still alive." There had been a moment in the course of the book's composition, it is true, when "his horizon seemed on the point of widening; but the author immediately re-directed his investigation towards the end to which he had voluntarily chosen to limit it; he obeyed a prepossession."

Canis reversus ad vomitum proprium! M. Lefranc finds evidence of all this in the testimony of the one whom he calls the quasi-official historian of the controversy, François Billon, who wrote the *Fort Inexpugnable de l'Honneur du Sexe Féminin.* In this allegorical work, Billon has Rabelais, as the protagonist of anti-feminism, brought captive into the camp of Virtue

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and delivered over to the ladies as a prize of war. Billon brings in paraphrased portions of the speech of Rondibilis, in the Third Book, by way of formal accusation. This Billon was secretary to Guillaume du Bellay in Turin, while Rabelais was court physician there. He knew Rabelais at close range, M. Lefranc says, and "if he reserved for him so special a place in his work, he did so in full consciousness that he had cause."

Alas, we wish we might assure ourselves that Billon's testimony to M. Lefranc's point is worth the paper it was written on. Billon published his work two years after Rabelais's death, when his memory was fair game for anyone who wished for any reason to disparage it. But we do not lay any stress on this; Billon may have written in all good faith, so let us say he did. Nothing is easier, however, than to put an ell's worth of misinterpretation of an author's personal sentiment upon the inch of sentiment that the author has put in the mouth of one of his personages. The classical example of this, probably, is that of charging the Psalmist with atheism because he wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." We shall apply this view in a moment. We also remark that on a controverted question, neutrality is, for an interested person, practically unthinkable; in this respect, Rabelais was open to the same order of misunderstanding that prevailed against him in the common thought of both Protestantism and Catholicism. Finally, we remark

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the general tendency, enhanced always by partisanship, to put the most unfavourable construction on something that is imperfectly understood, or not understood at all. After Pantagruel had listened a while to the Limosin's macaronic jargon, which he did not understand, he turned to his companions with the question, "'What devilish language is this?—by the Lord, I think thou are some kind of heretic!'"

All these considerations move us to great caution about taking Billon's testimony at its face value. We have already shown cause for our inability to assure ourselves that Rabelais was actually "under conviction" of anti-feminism even in his youth, when he was helping on Tiraqueau's revision of the *De Legibus* at Fontenay. We cannot accept M. Lefranc's view of the postponement of Pantagruel's voyages, or of the structural innovations in the Third Book, because we do not believe that when Rabelais ended the Second Book he had any more serious idea than we have at this moment, of ever sending Pantagruel on any voyage, or, indeed, of doing anything more with him; and, as we have explained, we think he laid out the Third Book on a new plan because the old one was about used up, and he wished to try his hand at playing with thought instead of action. The current controversy no doubt suggested Panurge's marriage as a sufficient string to hang his play on; and so, like a good artist, he took it, just as in like circumstances, when he wished to play

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with action, he took the controversy over the fish-weir as something to elaborate into the Picrocholine War. It is quite regularly said, even, that he wrote the Picrocholine War to vindicate his family's side of the shindy over de Ste.-Marthe's fish-weir. Again we say, it may be; but if so, he was not the Rabelais whom we know.

Moreover, we cannot be quite sure that the Third Book, taken by itself, may properly be held to convey an impression of anti-feminism on the part of the author. M. Lefranc himself remarks the strangeness of Rabelais's having associated the name of Marguerite of Navarre with the one book that was expressly anti-feminist; Marguerite, probably, had got her brother to issue Rabelais's copyright, and Rabelais repaid her by a poetical dedication, a *dizaine* of shocking bad verse, so poor that one would believe it made the cultivated lady squirm much more than all the anti-feminism that could be got between two covers. We wonder, however, if the able and brilliant women of the French Renaissance did not have better insight into such matters than the whole run of subsequent criticism has shown? We think it highly probable. Who among them would have arbitrarily identified Rabelais's own sentiments with those of the physician Rondibilis, or taken umbrage at the levity and cynicism of Panurge? Leaving out the greater Marguerites, Louises, Dianas, Annes, and Renées, let us run

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through the list of lesser lights as M. Lefranc names them—Anne de Graville, Louise de Montmorency, Marguerite de Bourg, Jeanne Gaillarde, Sybille and Claudine Scève, Pernette du Guillet—no, we think none of them. Perhaps the plaintive and sentimental Hélisenne de Crenne might have taken the Third Book a little to heart, but we suspect that the rest would see no more animus in it than a cultivated and experienced American woman of today would see; we suspect that it delighted them, quite as much as it would delight an accomplished woman of our time, as an incredibly great work of art.

M. Lefranc has well pointed out the two contrary traditions in which the literature of the controversy is ranged; "the *tradition gauloise*, satirical and frankly disparaging, and the idealist tradition, tending to exalt and panegyrize not only womankind, but also sentiments of love." It takes, then, no very intimate acquaintance with the personages of the Third Book to say in which tradition each must stand. Panurge, obviously, must draw his every breath in the *tradition gauloise;* he is the incarnation of it, its living exemplar. The theologian Hippothadeus stands in a professional variant of the idealist tradition. Pantagruel takes no stand; he is mostly the fulcrum on which the discussions balance. Friar John remains of the earth, earthy; his view of womankind, as of everything, is too kindly and generous to be termed precisely gross, but it is

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always exuberant, material, and positive. The physician Rondibilis is somewhat in the Gallic tradition, but he represents a profession that regularly sees human nature by the side of its weakness and frailty, and to a great extent judges it accordingly. All these personages appear in character; Rabelais is not interested in manœuvering them into the support of any moral or social thesis, or in making any of them his own mouthpiece for homiletical purposes. The identification of Rabelais's sentiments and point of view with those of any of them, seems to us arbitrary and unwarranted. Because the great Frans Snijders made up some still-life compositions out of huge heaps of sea-food, one is not quite justified in assuming that he liked fish. He may have liked them, or he may not; the picture testifies neither way; it testifies only that he thought they were interesting subjects to paint, and that he was right in thinking so. It bears no witness to his personal likes and dislikes, but only to the fact that he was a great artist.

We suspect that Rabelais decided to try his hand at playing with thought instead of action quite as Frans Snijders decided, for a change, to see what he could do with the still-life of a fish-counter instead of with living boars and stags; and because he was an artist of the very first order, he made his play with thought profoundly interesting. He knew how to present the anatomy of thought; he understood light and shade,

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perspective and line, he knew how to compose his subject in order to avoid awkwardness and monotony. In point of technique only, not of substance, one may compare the Third Book with the *Praise of Folly*, or the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More, to see how great an artist Rabelais was—to see, indeed, that he was altogether an artist, occupied primarily with an artist's enterprise.

It was an enterprise, moreover, of extreme difficulty, this management of a sustained play with thought in such a way as to avoid too long strain upon the reader's attention, continually bringing in the right turn of relief at the right time by the momentary introduction of a different order of thought, continually keeping his mode of expression so diversified and enlivened that at the end the reader might go away exhilarated rather than fatigued. In this, in the composition and arrangement of his still-life tableau, Rabelais seems to us to stand head and shoulders above all literary artists who have attempted the same thing. When disquisition shows signs of monotony, he drops in a classical allusion, a story, a digression upon another plane, always with purport of relief and relaxation. When the reader is got up too high in rarefied air, the dramatic device of collision of character brings him comfortably down to the lower levels, to get his breath again in a burst of mirth. Thus after Hippothadeus's apostrophe to virtuous womanhood has elevated the reader

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sufficiently from rhetorical glory unto glory, Panurge gently volplanes him down again with a few words of exquisite cynical irony. Hippothadeus says—and incidentally, if one wishes a fair sample of what our mother tongue can do, let him notice this—Hippothadeus assures Panurge that his wife will not go wrong if he but take care to choose "'one of a commendable extraction,

> descended of honest parents and instructed in all piety and virtue; such a one as hath not at any time haunted or frequented the company or conversation of those that are of corrupt or depraved manners; one loving and fearing God, who taketh a singular delight in drawing near to him by faith and the cordial observing of his sacred commandments; and finally, one who, standing in awe of the divine majesty of the Most High, will be loth to offend him and lose the favourable kindness of his grace through any defect of faith, or transgression against the ordinances of his holy law wherein adultery is most rigorously forbidden, and a close adherence to her husband alone is most strictly and severely enjoined; yea, in such sort that she is to cherish, serve and love him above anything, next to God, that meriteth to be beloved. . . .'
>
> 'You would have me then,' quoth Panurge, twisting the whiskers of his beard to either side with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand, 'to espouse and take to wife the prudent frugal woman described by Solomon: but without all doubt she is dead, and truly, to my best remembrance I never saw her; the Lord forgive me! nevertheless I thank you, father—eat this slice of marchpane; it will help your digestion.'"

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When the discussion takes a scientific turn, Rabelais sometimes depends on Friar John to keep it from overpowering the reader's attention, Friar John being quite the antithesis of the man of science. In the thirty-first chapter, the physician Rondibilis, as a serious scientific man, delivers a long dissertation upon five different artificial methods of disciplining the sex-appetite:

> '. . . I find in our faculty of medicine (and we have founded our opinion therein upon the deliberate resolution and final decision of the ancient Platonics) that carnal concupiscence is cooled and quelled five several ways. First, by the means of wine—'
>
> 'I shall easily believe that,' quoth Friar John, 'for when I am well whittled with the juice of the grape, I care for nothing else so I may sleep.'

Rondibilis then goes on with his exposition of four of the five methods, ornamenting his discourse with brilliant illustration and classical citation, much of it worthy to be remembered, as, for example, Diogenes's definition of lechery as "the occupation of folks destitute of all other occupations." Finally, after enumerating wine, certain cooling drugs, hard work, and hard study, he says:

> 'Fifthly, by the too frequent reiteration of the act of venery—'
>
> 'There did I wait for you,' quoth Panurge, 'and shall willingly apply it to myself, whilst any one that pleaseth may, for me, make use of any of the four preceding.'

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> 'That is the very same thing,' quoth Friar John, 'which father Scyllino, prior of St.-Victor at Marseilles, calleth by the name of maceration and taming of the flesh. I am of the same opinion, and so was the hermit of St.-Radegonde, a little above Chinon; for, quoth he, the hermits of Thebaid can no more aptly and expediently macerate and bring down the pride of their bodies, daunt and mortify their lecherous sensuality, or depress and overcome the stubbornness and rebellion of the flesh, than by duffling and fanferluching it five-and-twenty or thirty times a day.'

We unwillingly remind ourselves that we are writing only an introductory study, and must therefore be content with giving the reader his mere bearings, his line of approach and direction through these chapters. Once he is thoroughly permeated with a sense of Rabelais's leading qualities as an artist, we would have him observe two things: first, the immense amount and astonishing variety of erudition which Rabelais has at command as raw material to work up into the fabric of this huge tapestry; and second, the incredibly skilful management of it, the sensitive measure of literary light and shade, of depth and perspective, that is displayed in its arrangement and distribution. This kind of material is most refractory. There is no trouble about working it up into something that is very imposing and also very dull; anyone who has great learning can do that. The trouble with most displays of Renaissance learning—or post-Renaissance learning, for that matter—is that they are so hard to look at, so unin-

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Rondibilis

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teresting. The challenge that Rabelais saw laid down to him as an artist was to make an *interesting* display of erudition, one that should get in all the erudition available, that should neither vulgarize nor sophisticate it, and at the same time should keep the reader's interest fresh, his attention unwearied and expectant, by every device of wit and imagination and in virtue of the five qualities that we have just enumerated as eminently characteristic of Rabelais's literary art. If the reader will accept these suggestions, and while delighting himself with this great episode or tableau of Panurge's proposed marriage, if he will look closely into its workmanship and anatomy like an artist studying an *écorché*, if he will consider carefully every detail showing just how the immensely difficult terms of its artistic challenge were met, his enjoyment will be increased tenfold.

We may permit ourselves, however, to quote the passage which seems especially to have given Rabelais's detractors their chance to put him up in the front rank of the anti-feminists. The physician Rondibilis is expounding from a professional point of view, in the face of Panurge's misgivings, his thesis that " 'cuckoldry naturally attendeth marriage; the shadow doth not more naturally follow the body than cuckoldry ensueth after marriage, to place fair horns upon the husband's head.' " First let us notice a preliminary paragraph in order to make the kind of examination that we have

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just been recommending, to discern the workmanship, the detail of artistic management brought to bear upon the refractory material of erudition. " 'When you shall happen,' " Rondibilis assures Panurge,

> 'to hear any man pronounce these three words, *he is married,* if you then say he is, hath been, shall be or may be, a cuckold, you will not be accounted an unskilful artist in framing of true consequences.'
>
> 'Tripes and bowels of all the devils!' cried Panurge, 'what do you tell me?'
>
> 'My dear friend,' answered Rondibilis, 'as Hippocrates, on a time, was in the very nick of setting forward from Lango to Polistillo to visit the philosopher Democritus, he wrote a familiar letter to his friend Dionysius, wherein he desired him that he would, during the interval of his absence, carry his wife to the house of her father and mother, who were an honourable couple and of good repute; "because I would not have her in my home," said he, "to make abode in solitude. Yet notwithstanding this her residence before her parents, do not fail," quoth he, "with a most heedful care and circumspection to pry into her ways and to espy what places she shall go with her mother, and who those be that shall repair unto her. Not," quoth he, "that I do mistrust her virtue, or that I seem to have any diffidence of her pudicity and chaste behaviour, for of that I have frequently had good and real proofs, but I must freely tell you, *She is a woman:* there lies the suspicion." '

Shall we risk irritating the reader with a touch of pedantry, or shall we risk the very remote chance of his missing something if left unaided? We choose the

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former; nay, let us make a virtue of it, as Benjamin Constant did in proudly saying to his literary colleagues, "Let us never forget that we are all pedants!" In the foregoing we have first a generalization laid down by Rondibilis, not flatly in formal terms, but in literary terms that are individual and interesting; then the relieving colloquial interruption of Panurge; then the erudite citation of the letter of Hippocrates—spurious, by the way, but received as genuine in Rabelais's time—not formally staked off as a quotation, but managed into a conversational paraphrase, with even the conversational repeated "quoth he," so that it joins up perfectly with what precedes it, and the whole runs off simply, directly, and with great swiftness and momentum.

Rondibilis then goes on with his discourse, introducing an astronomical parallel:

> 'My worthy friend, the nature of woman is set forth before our eyes and represented unto us by the moon, in divers other things as well as in this, that they squat, sculk, constrain their own inclinations, and, with all the cunning they can, dissemble and play the hypocrite in the sight and presence of their husbands; who come no sooner to be out of the way but that forthwith they take their advantage, pass the time merrily, desist from all labour, frolic it, gad abroad, lay aside their counterfeit garb, and openly declare and manifest the interior of their dispositions; even as the moon, when she is in conjunction with the sun, is neither seen in the heavens nor on the earth; but in her opposition,

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when remotest from him, shineth in her greatest fulness, and wholly appeareth in her brightest splendour whilst it is night; thus women are but women.

'When I say *womankind,* I speak of a sex so frail, so variable, so changeable, so fickle, inconstant and imperfect, that in my opinion Nature (under favour, nevertheless, of the prime honour and reverence which is due unto her) did in a manner mistake the road which she had traced formerly, and stray exceedingly from that excellence of providential judgment by the which she had created and formed all other things, when she built, framed and made up the *woman.* And having thought upon it a hundred and five times, I know not what else to determine therein, save only that in the devising, hammering, forging and composing of the *woman,* she hath had a much tenderer regard and by a great deal more respectful heed to the delightful consortship and sociable delectation of the *man* than to the perfection and accomplishment of the individual womanishness or muliebrity.'

Keeping in mind our parallel with Frans Snijders's fish-counter, does this impress the reader as anything more than an extremely shrewd and brilliant representation of the *tradition gauloise,* strongly tempered by professionalism? There is not the least doubt in our minds that it made just this impression on the women of the Renaissance, who, after all, were vertebrated animals, who pretty well had the measure of their own selves and circumstances, and who also knew a thing or two about the prevailing intellectual shortcomings which their experience of the opposite sex had made

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rather regularly apparent to them. Even on the common assumption that women's sense of humour is only very special, is not just this the kind of thing best adapted to penetrate to that special sense? We think so; but here again we are quite content to abide by the judgment of the cultivated and experienced American woman of today. We doubt that the Marguerites, Annes, and Louises here suspected Rabelais of an anti-feminist bent, any more than of a pro-feminist bent in the account of the abbey of Thélème or the speech of Hippothadeus. We believe that they were delighted with the discourse of Rondibilis purely as great art, and that they would have been charmed to have Rabelais come and recite it to them amidst the applause of a crowded salon. Especially do we think they were delighted when Rondibilis's professionalism comes to the fore, and makes him interpret women's inconstancy and dissimulation in strictly physiological terms:

> 'The divine philosopher Plato was doubtful in what rank of living creatures to place and collocate them, whether among the rational animals, by elevating them to an upper seat in the specifical classes of humanity; or with the irrational, by degrading them to a lower bench on the opposite side, of a brutish kind and mere bestiality: for Nature hath posited in a private, secret and intestine place of their bodies a sort of member, by some not impertinently termed an *animal,* which is not to be found in men. Therein sometimes are engendered certain humours, so saltish, brackish, clammy, sharp, nipping, tearing, prickling and most eagerly

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tickling, that by their stinging acrimony, rending nitrosity, figging itch, wriggling mordicancy and smarting salsitude (for the said member is altogether sinewy and of a most quick and lively feeling) their whole body is shaken and ebrangled, their senses totally ravished and transported, the operation of their judgment and understanding utterly confounded, and all disordinate passions and perturbations of the mind thoroughly and absolutely allowed, admitted and approved of; yea, in such sort that if Nature had not been so favourable unto them as to have sprinkled their forehead with a little tincture of bashfulness and modesty, you should see them in a frantic mood run mad after lechery, and hie apace up and down with haste and lust in quest of, and to fix some chamber-standard in their Paphian ground, that never did the Proetides, Mimallonides nor Lyæan Thyads deport themselves in the time of their Bacchanalian festivals more shamelessly or with so effronted and brazen-faced impudence; because this terrible *animal* is knit unto, and hath a union with, all the chief and most principal parts of the body, as to anatomists is evident. Let it not here be thought strange that I should call it an *animal,* seeing therein I do not otherwise than follow and adhere to the doctrine of the Academic and Peripatetic philosophers. For if a proper motion be a certain mark and infallible token of the life and animation of the mover (as Aristotle writeth) and that any such thing as moveth of itself ought to be held animated and of a living nature, then assuredly Plato with very good reason did give it the denomination of an animal; for that he perceived and observed in it the proper and self-stirring motions of suffocation, precipitation, corrugation and of indignation, so extremely violent that oftentimes by them is

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taken and removed from the woman all other sense and moving whatsoever, as if she were in a swooning lipothymy, benumbing syncope, epileptic, apoplectic palsy, and true resemblance of a pale-faced death.'

V

The interpolated episode of Bridlegoose, in chapters thirty-nine to forty-four, shows a new variant of the display of erudition, and one that is embarrassing to the modern reader. Law is a matter of statute and precedent; and the only way one can display legal learning is by a parade of bare references. Such was the power of seduction exercised by learning upon Rabelais and his contemporaries that this kind of thing was most enthusiastically appreciated. The modern reader, however, can do nothing with it beyond recognizing its merits as a *tour de force,* like the long strings of descriptive adjectives and the tedious categories of titles that Rabelais occasionally spins out. There is a great deal of very fine meat to be got out of the episode of Bridlegoose, as out of a shad, and if the reader does not let himself be put off by the rather formidable look of its bones, he will find himself well repaid.

Bridlegoose was an upright old jurist of Fonsbeton; he had been on the bench forty years. His procedure was this: when a case came before him, he would carefully read over all the documents that the lawyers had prepared pro and con; then he would stack up

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the plaintiff's papers at one end of his table, the defendant's papers at the other, and throw dice for a decision between them. This method had worked so well that although out of the four thousand cases brought before him in the course of his career, more than half had been appealed from his decision, he had never once been reversed by the higher court. He kept two sets of dice, one large, the other small. When there were few papers in a case, he used the large dice, and the small ones when there were many, on the reasonable assumption that the fewer the documents the less intricate the case. His long life of honour, however, bade fair to end in ignominy; for he was finally reversed in a case against the subsidy-assessor Toucheronde, and the appeal brought about a general inquiry and investigation into his judicial methods.

It was while this inquiry was going on that Pantagruel went to visit him, and Pantagruel was invited to sit in judgment on it. Six chapters are taken up with Bridlegoose's defence of his methods, and with Pantagruel's decision in his favour. The gist of Bridlegoose's defence was that the regular court procedure did not differ essentially from his own; the difference was only superficial; his methods were essentially the same as those of other judges, with justice quite as likely to accrue, as was evident by the general satisfaction and approval evoked by his decisions. In the case of Toucheronde there had been a great many docu-

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Bridlegoose

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ments filed, he had used his small dice, and since his eyesight had failed considerably with age, he had simply made a mistake. "By reason of which infirmity he was not able so distinctly and clearly to discern the points of the dice as formerly he had been accustomed to do; whence it might very well have happened, said he, as old dim-sighted Isaac took Jacob for Esau, that after the same manner, at the decision of causes and controversies in law, he might have been mistaken in taking a four for a five, or a tray for a deuce." The consequences of this disability, however, as Bridlegoose with great acuteness represented, could not legally be held against him. "'Your worship,' said he, 'knows very well how by the most authentic rules of the law it is provided that the imperfections of nature should never be imputed unto any for crimes and transgressions; as appeareth *ff. de re milit, l. qui cum uno. ff. de reg. jur. fere ff. de ædil. ed. per totum. ff. de term. mod. l. divus Adrianus re solut. per Lud. Ro. in l. si vero. ff. fol. matri.* And who would offer to do otherways should not thereby accuse the man, but Nature and the all-seeing providence of God, as is evident in *l. maximum vitium C. de lib. præter.*'" This one quotation will be enough to exhibit the literary dexterity with which Rabelais manages the peculiarly stiff and intractable material of legal erudition. His learning in the law, both civil and canon, must indeed have been

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very great, and like all the rest of his learning, it lay marvellously accessible and ready at command. His use of it gives the impression communicated by all his pages, that he could at any moment reach into his mind and pick out anything that had been stored up there.

There is an interesting coincidence in the fact that a new edition of Tiraqueau's work *De Legibus* came out in 1546, the year in which the Third Book appeared. This coincidence, moreover, presents a puzzle. Rabelais certainly levied on this new edition for some direct borrowings; he has lifted some odds and ends that are found in this edition only. One wonders how he got hold of them, for at this time Tiraqueau, the honoured and prosperous bourgeois jurist, officer of the Parlement of Paris, was very offish toward Rabelais. It was in this edition of the *De Legibus*, indeed, that he suppressed his eulogies of Rabelais's scholarship, and Rabelais's complimentary Greek epigram, all of which had appeared in the previous edition of 1524. Perhaps Rabelais happened to see the proofs of the new edition, but no one knows. It would seem certain, however, that the episode of Bridlegoose did nothing to get Rabelais back into Tiraqueau's good graces, but rather the contrary; the literal-minded bourgeois jurist can never easily abide any one's laying a profane tongue to the sacrosanct jargon of the law.

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VI

In the concluding chapters of the Third Book, Rabelais took one of the accepted properties of popular comedy, the enigma, and made it the mechanism for a grand final pyrotechnic display of erudition. He takes an article to which he gives the name of pantagruelion, and then, somewhat after our popular variant of the enigma in the game called Twenty Questions, he puts every resource of his learning to the service of telling all about it, but never tells what it is. The main point or purpose of this kind of play seems to have been different at that time from what it is now. The success of an enigma, apparently, did not depend upon the length of time one was kept guessing, but upon the length of time that the reciter could play interestingly around his subject without saying in so many words what it was. Judged by this canon, the enigma of the pantagruelion is an unprecedented success. It occupies four long chapters of Rabelais's best style, and calls forth a dazzling display of erudition in almost every branch of art and science then known.

Between the trial of Bridlegoose and the enigma of the pantagruelion, there is a brief reversion to Panurge's marriage-quest. After having consulted all the representatives of science and pseudo-science, after submitting his problem to the test of the Virgilian and

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Homeric lottery, Panurge finally takes counsel of a fool. Triboulet's advice comes no nearer satisfying him than any of all he had got before, so he begs Pantagruel to organize a voyage to the final authority, the Oracle of the Holy Bottle. Pantagruel agrees, and lays the matter before Gargantua, who consents, and offers every facility. Gargantua takes the occasion to deliver a long discourse on marriage, which is notably well worth reading because it somewhat anticipates the complaint of latter-day feminism against the disabilities put upon women by both sacred and secular laws of marriage. Gargantua is but little of an anti-feminist, however much of one his historian may be. If Panurge and Rondibilis are in the *tradition gauloise*, Gargantua seems not to be; nor is he any more in the idealist tradition maintained by the tenants of the abbey of Thélème. Quite as much, probably, as one could expect from any man of his day, he is simply an unprepossessed and unpretentious exponent of the square deal.

The accomplished M. Pierre Villey, professor at the University of Caen, has made some admirable observations on the leading characteristics of the Third Book. He remarks its advance in scientific precision; where there are twenty citations of authority in the Second Book and sixty in the First, the Third has over 150. In the Third Book Rabelais used dialectic, in a sort of burlesque, but rather exploiting its comic elements

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than ridiculing it. There is in it a savoury mixture of academic learning and everyday reality; reminiscences of wide reading; display of science; great knowledge of law and legal process, gained from study and wrought into form by association with practitioners; above all, wisdom, good sense, equity, a robust intellectual balance; and, here as everywhere, Rabelais shows steadily his detachment from, and his long perspective over, the fortuitous events of human life.

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Chapter Eight

THE Fourth and Fifth Books have the most accommodating structual plan of all. They are simply the account of a voyage, and any incident may happen on a voyage, anything may be encountered, any idea may be broached and talked about; so Rabelais, in adopting this plan, made composition as easy and unrestrained as possible. It was a good plan, too, inasmuch as it fell in with a topic of great public interest at the moment. We have already shown how eagerly people were following the exploits of navigation at this period, and the fabulous expectations that were put upon them. In the twenty-fourth chapter of the Second Book, published in 1532, in order for Pantagruel to get from Paris to his native land of Utopia in the Far East, Rabelais had him take the eastern route, around the Cape of Good Hope. At the end of the Second Book, he promised an account of a voyage to the west, "through the Atlantic sea," by way of the Cannibal or Caribbean Islands. But in the course of twenty years, popular imagination had turned away from a possible southern or equatorial westward route

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to the "regions of Cathay," and had become interested in a northern route, owing to the explorations of Jacques Cartier. It was supposed that the St. Lawrence led directly to Asia by a relatively short way; and Rabelais, following this turn of popular interest, has Pantagruel and his party set out on the northern route and reach Upper India in four months!

The mechanics of the Fourth Book are so simple and flexible that the reader need not be detained by them; they account for themselves as one goes along; the book is but a string of incidents, none of them needing much explanation. In character, the Fourth Book is much like the Third; it is a mixture of marvellous imagination, bizarre and amusing symbolism, of erudition and popular comic elements. Rabelais picks out of the commonplace something that interests him, puts it in a setting which he vivifies by a few actual details, and then lets his fancy and imagination have free play on it. For example, in his account of the start of the expedition, having introduced the guide Xenomanes, the great traveller and old acquaintance of Panurge, a sort of Marco Polo, who knew the route to the Oracle of the Bottle, Rabelais turns loose his gay imagination on a description of the ensign or oriflamme of each ship. Pantagruel's principal flag-ship had mounted on her stern "a huge large bottle, half silver, well polished, the other half gold, enameled with carnation." Among the rest—

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> The third ship had for her device a fine deep china ewer. The fourth, a double-handled jar of gold, much like an ancient urn. The fifth, a famous can, made of sperm of emerald. The sixth, a monk's flask, made of the four metals together. The seventh, an ebony funnel, all embossed and wrought with gold, after the tauchic manner. The eighth, an ivy goblet, very precious, inlaid with gold. The ninth, a cup of fine obriz gold. The tenth, a tumbler of aromatic agoloch (you call it lign-aloes) edged with cyprian gold, after the azemine make. The eleventh, a golden vine-tub of mosaic work. The twelfth, a runlet of unpolished gold, covered with a small vine, of large Indian pearl of topiarian work.

There is a characteristic particularity of information here, of a rather special and unusual kind; and it is drawn out to this length for the sake of being put at service of the whimsical idea that follows:

> Insomuch that there was no man, however in the dumps, musty, sour-visaged or melancholic he were, not even excepting that blubbering whiner Heraclitus, had he been there, but seeing this noble convoy of ships and their devices, must have been seized with present gladness of heart, and smiling at the conceit, have said that the travellers were all honest topers, true pitchermen.

The Fourth Book contains a number of these scraps of information of an unusual kind, which its loose and elastic structure—it is really but a series of short sketches—enabled Rabelais freely to work in. In the prologue (where, by the way, if one can make a choice among things equally good, is perhaps Rabelais's best

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piece of interpolated story-telling, the tale of Tom Wellhung and his hatchet) Priapus runs over the list of Netherlandish artists who established the practice of music in France. It seems an odd thing to find there; very effective, but one wonders how he thought of it. In the second chapter there are further odds and ends of æsthetics, in the description of painting and tapestry bought by the travellers in the island of Medamothy; and also some curious items of natural history that run on into the third chapter.

Then the narrative is lightened by the diverting episode of Dingdong and his sheep. Perhaps the best view and measure that one can get of Rabelais's originality is through his borrowings from others, as we remarked in connexion with the story of Hans Carvel's ring. He lifts the story of Dingdong straight from Folengo; but compare the two! what vividness and force in Rabelais's version, what driving speed! what consummate art in character-portrayal that makes Dingdong a breathing figure! We shall not enumerate the several sketches that follow upon this, for they sufficiently explain themselves, even to the long disquisition on the practices of pettifogging and "the strange way of living among the catchpoles." A flight of pure fancy, of most extraordinary and whimsical originality, appears in the account of the giant Widenostrils. The circumstances of Widenostrils's death, too, enable Rabelais to make a long display of classical erudition, de-

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vised so informally and naturally that the story seems to call for it; it has not the least air of being lugged in by the ears. The vivid description of a great storm at sea plays off a superb dramatic contrast of character between Friar John and Panurge. The story of Gaster, "the first master of arts in the world," is a brief and interesting prose enigma, like that of the pantagruelion; it is an expansion of a line in the prologue of the Roman satirist Persius. Gaster is the stomach; and the turn of the enigma is to show how the conduct and pursuits of all living creatures are in the end governed by economic pressure:

> We were all obliged to pay our homage and swear allegiance to that mighty sovereign; for he is imperious, severe, blunt, hard, uneasy and inflexible; you cannot make him believe, represent unto him, or persuade him anything; he does not hear. . . . I assure you that at master Gaster's command, the very heavens tremble and all the earth shakes: his command is called, Do this, or die. . . . What company soever he is in, none disputes with him for precedence or superiority; he still goes first, though kings, emperors or even the pope were there. . . . Everyone is busied, and labours to serve him; and indeed, to make amends for this, he does this good to mankind, as to invent for them all arts, machines, trades, engines and crafts. He even instructs brutes in arts which are against their nature, . . . and all for the gut.
>
> Salt- and fresh-water fish, whales and the monsters of the main, he brings up from the bottom of the deep; wolves he forces out of the woods, bears out of the

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rocks, foxes out of their holes and serpents out of the ground; and all for the gut.

In short, he is so unruly that in his rage he devours all men and beasts, as was seen among the Vascons when Q. Metellus besieged them in the Sertorian wars; among the Saguntines besieged by Hannibal; among the Jews besieged by the Romans, and six hundred more; and all for the gut.

In the island of Ruach (the Hebrew word meaning wind) Pantagruel discovers an extraordinary set of people, whose whole civilization depends on wind; "they live on nothing but wind, eat nothing but wind, and drink nothing but wind. . . . When they would have some noble treat, the tables are spread under one or two windmills. There they feast as merry as beggars, and during the meal their whole talk is commonly of the goodness, excellency, salubrity and rarity of winds; as you, jolly topers, in your cups, philosophize and argue upon wines." It is a diverting and suggestive picture. The one capital instance, however, of Rabelais's incredible virtuosity in combining the elements of the marvellous, the actual, and the symbolical, is in the amazing figure of Shrovetide or Lent, the monarch of the Sneaking Island. In three chapters, from the thirtieth to the thirty-third, he uses the familiar comic mechanism of the long-drawn-out category to bring together the scientific and the fanciful, showing how "Shrovetide is anatomized and described by Xenomanes." It is by far the most remarkable of

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all his *tours de force* of that order. The enmity between Shrovetide and the Chitterlings and Sausages, who inhabited the neighbouring Wild Island, was probably suggested by the increasing animosity between Protestantism and ultramontane Romanism; but here as elsewhere, we are convinced that too much may be made, and invariably is made, of the deliberately satirical intention behind Rabelais's symbolism. The challenge of this animosity was laid down to him primarily as an artist, and as an artist he accepted it; and the result is there to furnish the reader in all ages with whatever special analogies his own circumstances may move him to see in it. For example, no reader of the present time can miss the implications at the end of the thirty-fifth chapter, upon the threadbare absurdity of the political gestures that are everywhere being made towards disarmament and permanent international peace. Rabelais might well have been writing the story of the League of Nations, the Kellogg Treaty, or the Bryan Treaties; yet one may not say that the applicability of what he writes to matters which are today the food of universal skepticism is an index of skepticism or cynicism on his own part. On the contrary, it is clear to us that he was merely putting the last touches on a brilliant and excellent picture, albeit one suggested by the course of current affairs in his own day. "'Pray, dear friend,'" says the peace-loving Pantagruel—

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'if you find that by some honest means we may bring this war to an end, and reconcile them together, give me notice of it. I will use my endeavours in it with all my heart, and spare nothing on my side to moderate and accommodate the points in dispute between both parties.'

'That's impossible at this time,' answered Xenomanes. 'About four years ago, passing incognito by this country, I endeavoured to make a peace, or at least a long truce among them; and I certainly had brought them to be good friends and neighbours if both one and the other parties would have yielded to one single article. Shrovetide would not include in the treaty of peace the wild puddings nor the highland sausages, their ancient gossips and confederates. The Chitterlings demanded that the fort of Caques might be under their government, as is the castle of Sullouoir, and that a parcel of I-don't-know-what stinking villains, murderers, robbers, that held it then, should be expelled. But they could not agree in this, and the terms that were offered seemed too hard to either party. So the treaty broke off, and nothing was done. Nevertheless they became less severe, and gentler enemies than they were before. But since the denunciation of the national council of Chesil, whereby the Chitterlings were roughly handled, hampered and cited; whereby also Shrovetide was declared filthy, beshitten and bewrayed in case he made any league or agreement with them; they are grown wonderfully inveterate, incensed and obstinate against one another, and there is no way to remedy it. You might sooner reconcile cats and rats, or hounds and hares, together.'

The great passage that relates the voyagers' experiences on the island of Papimany, occupying chapters

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forty-eight to fifty-five, is one which the reader peruses again and again with unbounded delight, and which is made wholly intelligible by a word of explanation concerning the decretals, the sacred book which was the object of blind adoration and worship by the island's inhabitants. Up to the thirteenth century, the church of Rome based its ecclesiastical rights on the canons and decrees of the general church councils, as collected and codified by the monk Gratian. In 1234, Gregory IX charged his chaplain, the Dominican monk Ramon de Pennefort, to codify all the rulings of the popes who had preceded him; this collection made up five volumes, and was called *Decretals;* these rulings were to have the force of law in interpreting the conciliar canons and decrees. The process was much the same as that by which the written constitution of a country—our own, for example—is indefinitely extended by a series of judicial "interpretations" which have the force of constitutional law, and which frequently represent the most gross and scandalous usurpations of legislative function. In 1298, Boniface VIII added another volume called *Sextum;* and in 1313, Clement V added another, called *Clementinæ;* and later still, in the time of Rabelais, two more were added, called *Extravagantes* from their being in the nature of an appendix (*quæ vagantur extra*) to the official collection. From the end of the twelfth century, then, it was upon these extra-conciliar interpretations and rulings that the secu-

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lar authority of the bishop of Rome was chiefly based; and hence the Papimanes, as sound ultramontane Romanists, regarded them with an exclusive veneration. They would seem never even to have heard of the body of conciliar law, but only of these papal glosses which Homenas, the bishop of Papimany, declares were written by the hand of an angel, and then "'miraculously transmitted to us here from the very heaven of heavens.'" At the banquet which Homenas offered the voyagers, he begins to apostrophize the sacred book immediately after the first toast. "'O most holy decretals, how good is good wine found through your means! . . . O seraphic sextum! how necessary are you not to the salvation of poor mortals! O cherubic clementinæ! how perfectly the perfect institution of a true Christian is contained and described in you! O angelical extravagantes! how many poor souls that wander up and down in mortal bodies through this vale of misery, would perish, were it not for you!'" When Epistemon mentions the chapters "'that draw every year out of France to Rome four hundred thousand ducats and more,'" Homenas promptly challenges him to "'find me in the whole world a book, whether of philosophy, physic, law, mathematics, or other human learning, nay, even, by my God, of the Holy Scripture itself, that will draw as much money thence. None, none, pshaw, tush, blurt, pish! none can. You may look till your eyes drop out of your head, nay,

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till doomsday in the afternoon, before you can find another of that energy, I'll pass my word for that. Yet these devilish heretics refuse to learn and know it. Burn 'em, tear 'em, nip 'em with hot pincers, . . . decretalifuges, decretalicides, worse than homicides, worse than parricides, decretalictiones of the devil of hell!

'As for you other good people, I must earnestly pray and beseech you to believe no other thing, to think on, say, undertake or do no other thing than what's contained in our sacred decretals and their corollaries, this fine sextum, these fine clementinæ, these fine extravagantes. O deific books! so shall you enjoy glory, honour, exaltation, wealth, dignities and preferments in this world, be revered and dreaded by all, preferred, elected and chosen above all men. . . .

'What, on your conscience, was it, d'ye think, that established, confirmed and authorized those fine religious orders, with whom you see the Christian world everywhere adorned, graced and illustrated, as the firmament is with its glorious stars? The holy decretals.

'What was it that founded, underpropped and fixed, and now maintains, nourishes and feeds the devout monks and friars in convents, monasteries and abbeys, so that did they not daily and mightily pray without ceasing, the world would be in evident danger of returning to its primitive chaos? The sacred decretals.

'What makes and daily increases the famous and celebrated patrimony of St. Peter in plenty of all temporal, corporal and spiritual blessings? The holy decretals.

'What made the holy Apostolic See and pope of Rome, in all times and at this present, so dreadful in

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the universe that all kings, emperors, potentates and lords, willing-nilling must depend on him, hold of him, be crowned, confirmed and authorized by him, come thither to strike sail, buckle and fall down before his holy slipper, whose picture you have seen? The mighty decretals of God.

'I will discover you a great secret. The universities of your world have commonly a book, open or shut, in their arms and devices: What book do you think it is?' 'Truly I do not know,' answered Pantagruel, 'I never read it.' 'It is the decretals,' said Homenas, 'without which the privileges of all universities would soon be lost. You must own I have taught you this—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!'

Here Homenas began to belch, to fart, to funk, to laugh, to slaver and to sweat; and then he gave his huge greasy four-cornered cap to one of the lasses, who clapped it on her pretty head with a great deal of joy, after she had lovingly bussed it, as a sure token that she should be first married. . . .

'O apocalyptic secret!' continued Homenas, '. . . I was saying, then, that giving yourselves thus wholly to the study of the holy decretals, you'll gain wealth and honour in this world. I add, that in the next you'll infallibly be saved in the blessed kingdom of heaven, whose keys are given to our good God[1] and decretaliarch. O my good God whom I adore and never saw, by thy special grace open unto us at the point of death at least, this most sacred treasure of our holy mother church, whose protector, preserver, butler, chief larder, administrator and disposer thou art; and take care, I beseech thee, O Lord, that the precious works of supererogation, the goodly pardons, do not fail us in time of need; so that the devils may not find an opportunity to

[1] The Papimanes worshipped the pope as God-on-earth.

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gripe our precious souls, and the dreadful jaws of hell may not swallow us. . . .'

Here Homenas began to shed huge, hot, briny tears, to beat his breast, and kiss his thumbs, held in the shape of a cross.

This episode of the island of Papimany was suggested by a serious crisis in public affairs. Francis I's successor, Henry II, had no sooner ascended the throne in 1547 than he became embroiled with the pope over certain sharp practices prevalent in the traffic in benefices. In September, 1547, he issued an edict severely restricting the papal authority in his dominions, even establishing control over apostolic notaries, and over bankers who had correspondence with Rome. Julius III retaliated by making common cause with the old enemy, Charles V, in ousting the duke of Parma; whereupon Henry II immediately threw his support to the duke. The pope transferred the œcumenical council, convened in 1545, from Bologna to Trent, under pressure from Charles; Henry, disgusted with this act on the part of a pope whom his own cardinals had made, and having no faith whatever in the council's impartiality, began preliminaries on his own account for an independent national church council to institute ecclesiastical reforms in France. Julius III then began to speak of excommunicating Henry; in July, 1551, diplomatic relations were broken off, and the pope and Henry exchanged formal declarations, couched in terms of bitterness.

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All this was water to the mill of the Gallican nationalist party that desired larger autonomy for the French church. Schism was imminent; at a meeting of the royal council held early in August, 1551, the newly-made cardinal of Lorraine, a most skilful diplomat and negotiator, was barely able to avert it. The Sorbonne itself had laid down the proposition that neither the king nor the Gallican church owed allegiance to the pope. At the same time, Henry was more than ever scrupulous and severe against Calvinism, in order to make it clear to hesitant and timorous Catholics that schism would carry no implications of heresy; the edict of Chateaubriand, formulated against the Protestants, was signed 27 June, 1551, when the disagreement with the pope was at its height. But there was no schism; economic pressure brought the pope to terms at once. Early in September, Henry II put an embargo on money destined for Rome from the expediting of benefices, and the pope immediately wrote a conciliatory letter, which Henry answered in kind; so diplomatic relations were presently resumed, and the heat of controversy began to be dissipated. English money had been pretty well dammed up at its source by the energetic hand of Henry VIII, and Julius III was uncomfortably aware that without French money one could hardly hope to drag along.

Such was the political atmosphere surrounding the composition of the Fourth Book. In the same year

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that the Fourth Book came out, 1552, an eminent jurist, Charles du Moulin, published a scholarly volume which he had been at work on since 1547, an extended commentary on Henry's edict of that year. He made a critical examination of the sources of the pope's temporal authority, showing that the progressive assumption of temporal rights rested only on the decretals; that it was, in short, a seizure of power, a progressive usurpation. He enumerated fourteen several ways by which "gold was subtly drawn out of France to Rome," and estimated the total annual outflow at something like a million livres. This book, which was dedicated to Henry II, immediately struck the popular French sentiment for national autonomy in ecclesiastical concerns, and became for a time a kind of campaign-document for the Gallican party. But its prestige was short-lived, showing the fate of those who "in quarrels interpose." When Henry and the pope came to terms again, the book was officially frowned upon, and du Moulin was forced to seek safety in exile.

In our judgment, Rabelais's episode of the Papimanes evinces only an incidental and adventitious agreement with the contentions of Gallicanism; one cannot easily see partisanship in it. He picked up a topic of current popular interest, as he was always doing, merely because it was there, it was handy, it was something that lent itself easily and naturally to first-class literary treatment. This treatment did, as a matter

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of fact, bring him out on the side of the Sorbonne for the first time in his life, on the side of the king—for the moment, at least—and of the Gallicans, among whom was du Bellay and also de Châtillon, who in 1550 had got Henry II to renew Rabelais's copyright. But that Rabelais wrote primarily for polemic purposes may be doubted; it is one thing that what a man writes is such as may be used for polemic purposes, and quite another that he wrote with such purposes in view. Rabelais's interest was in humanism, and he could see that the cause of humanism would be but little set forward by either a Gallican triumph or an ultramontane triumph. Nor is it clear that he wrote as he did to ingratiate himself with the Sorbonne or further to consolidate his personal standing with the king and with his own friends and patrons of the Gallican party. The latter was apparently unnecessary, and the former was impossible. Even if he had published a serious treatise on the Gallican question, like du Moulin's, one must doubt that it would have improved his position with the Sorbonne, and certainly a *jeu d'esprit* like the episode of the Papimanes would not improve it. Probably the Sorbonne was chagrined when the Fourth Book came out, to find itself in such bad company; it may have asked itself the Psalmist's question, "What have I done that the wicked should praise me?"

All commentators, however, we think without exception, have seen a polemic and ingratiating intention be-

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hind the episode of the Papimanes, and they have first-rate circumstantial evidence to warrant their view. Here was an opportunity to propitiate the Sorbonne, to curry favour with the king, to make oneself wholly solid with one's influential friends; Rabelais wrote something appropriate to this opportunity; therefore he wrote with these ends in view. Possibly he did; no one may say flatly that he did not. Still, it seems a poor compliment to Rabelais's intelligence to suppose he did not know that the Sorbonne was about as amenable in the premises as the United States Supreme Court would be. In fact, the Sorbonne proscribed the Fourth Book as soon as it went on the market, just as it had proscribed the three preceding; and even Rabelais's old friend and preceptor Tiraqueau, who was on the bench, did not lift a finger to save it. As for the king and court, Rabelais was in an excellent position, hardly to be improved, as far as one can see; and much more likely to be improved, we should say, by a dissertation of the type of du Moulin's, which Rabelais was quite capable of writing, than by anything in the tone and temper of the episode which he did write. No, we cannot make so much of the politics of the Papimany episode; our impression is that there was a fine stirring story in the Gallican controversy, and that it was much more by luck than by management that the current of the story ran in the direction it took.

The tone and temper, we say. There seems to us

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an evidential value in these that is often disregarded entirely, never adequately appraised. The ardour of the political struggle, the militancy of Gallicanism and ultramontanism, the antagonisms of sovereignty, far from making the Papimany episode sombre with repressed wrath, seem only to have illuminated it with the most brilliant gaiety. It is, we think, the gayest, most joyous episode in the whole work. We think, moreover, that such sustained gaiety in the treatment of a pressing public question cannot possibly be counterfeited; we do not know of a single example where such counterfeit is either known or suspected, and we firmly believe that it is beyond the power of any writer who ever lived to make one that the most moderate literary experience could not instantly detect. We firmly believe that no man who was really and seriously preoccupied with the success of one cause over another, who really expected something gratifying, salutary, and substantial from its triumph, could possibly infuse that tone and temper into what he wrote about it. We once more leave the decision to the reader. Just now we made an over-long quotation from the table-talk of Homenas purposely to show the reader something of what that tone and temper is. Now let him go over the whole episode, remark its abounding, its exuberant joyousness and gaiety, and then apply the testimony of its general tone and temper to the question that the commentators have set.

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Here, too, we are brought face to face with another matter that has always troubled us, and that we may as well have out with the reader at once: the classification of Rabelais as a satirist. He is known *semper, ubique et ab omnibus* as the greatest satirist that ever lived. One may not have the temerity to challenge the whole world's judgment, nor would one wish to show disrespect to one's readers by splitting hairs with them over a definition; but we may presume, perhaps, to show cause for our own slight hesitation and reluctance about falling in with this universal view. Rabelais was a great critic of society, he had all a satirist's anatomical skill; but had he the satirist's *temper?* The one thing pre-eminently communicated by even the most casual reading of Rabelais is surely the sense of unbounded joy, of limitless gaiety and high spirits; and this sense is not communicated by the satirists, as far as we know them, it does not betoken the characteristic temper of the satirist. Those satirists who do not actually breathe forth the *sæva indignatio* of a Juvenal or a Swift seem to us yet to show a certain condescension of temper towards the circumstances that their satire contemplates; they do not maintain a steady and effortless superiority to them, they are more or less ruffled, or at least they make one conscious of a disciplinary effort against being ruffled. Taking well-known examples from our own time, Artemus Ward and Mark Twain were eminently critics of society, and Mark

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Twain's work discloses what seems to us the true and characteristic temper of the satirist; one feels that the *sæva indignatio* against the sins and stupidities of what he sometimes called "the damned human race," if not always actually manifest, is never very far off, its proximity surcharges the general atmosphere of his work as the physical atmosphere is surcharged by a thunderstorm that is not yet in sight or hearing. In Artemus Ward's work, on the other hand, one is never conscious of any such condescension of temper; he maintains an easy, joyous, and invariable superiority towards the circumstances that call forth his criticism.

Perhaps we are wrong in intimating that this condescension is of the essence of satire, and we are glad to let the point go with the remark, which we think we could justify, that it is associated with all the satire we know. We are quite willing to join in classifying Rabelais as a satirist as well as a critic, provided it be clearly perceived that his work gives no sense of such condescension of spirit and temper. The observation is important because it is just here, in this consistent elevation, this invariable superiority, that Rabelais most benefits his reader. By keeping open this particular channel of communication with Rabelais's spirit, the reader develops in his own spirit a like superiority, wise, joyous, humorous, imaginative, and imperturbable, towards his own circumstances. This is not the *æquanimitas* of Marcus Aurelius; by comparison it lacks

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nobility and beauty. But the nobility and beauty of Marcus Aurelius are almost unearthly; they are for that rare composite of sage and saint which unfortunately the vast majority of mankind are not and will never be; most of us at best can only look upon the great emperor—no doubt the noblest and most beautiful figure in human history—with a discouraged wistfulness. Rabelais is for the common man who hardly has it in him to be either sage or saint, but who wishes to learn something about the difficult and interesting art of living. It is through association with the spirit of Rabelais that one's equanimity becomes suffused with *joy*, and thus is turned into a true and energizing superiority; thus it is that one makes progress in pantagruelism, "a certain jollity of mind, pickled in the scorn of fortune." M. Faguet defines Rabelais's temper as that of "a gay stoicism," which seems to us rather a dubious term. Superiority—that is the right word—a gay, joyous, wise, imaginative, tolerant superiority. This is a communicable quality, even contagious, and in keeping one's spirit continually exposed to its contagion, one finds that much of the fine art of living manages somehow to get itself learned.

For in his estimate of the values of life, Rabelais is indeed wholly with the sages and the saints; it is only in method that he is not with them. He does not recommend the humane life; he exhibits it, and lets it recommend itself. He does not denounce the triviality

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and hollowness of what for most men are master-concerns—riches, place, power, and the profound sophistications of character incident to their pursuit—no, all this again, he simply exhibits. There is nothing of the hortatory or pulpit style in his moralities, and they are all the more effective for its absence. *Empty and rotten and trifling!* says Marcus Aurelius of the common master-concerns of life; and those who are engaged with them are like "little dogs biting one another, and little children quarrelling, laughing, and then straightway weeping." Yes, one assents to that, but one must have a touch of the sage or saint in oneself to be really energized by it. "The fashion of this world passeth away," said Goethe, "and I would fain occupy myself with the things that are abiding." Well, we all feel like that, sometimes at least; but the common sort of man is not really much moved by declamation of this kind, impressive as it is. Even the majestic sentence carved on the tomb of one of the Scipios, *Qui apicem gessisti, mors perfecit tua ut essent omnia brevia, honos fama virtusque, gloria atque ingenium*—even this is profoundly melancholy in its majesty, melancholy and relaxing. Rabelais is dynamogenous and illuminating; he *lights up* the humane life with the light of great joy, so that it shows itself as something lovely and infinitely desirable, by the side of which all other attainments fall automatically into their proper place as cheap, poor, and trivial. One closes with it

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gladly, joyfully, perceiving that for the sake of it all else that is lost is well lost.

II

After the death of Rabelais in 1553, several books purporting to be by him were brought out; publishers were none too scrupulous in their desire to exploit his popularity. Among these was one called *The Ringing Island*, which appeared in 1562; it was published without date and without the name of the publisher. It consisted of the first sixteen chapters of what we now have as the Fifth Book. Two years later, in 1564, eleven years after the author's death, the Fifth Book as we now have it was published, under the title, *Fifth and Last Book of the Heroic Deeds and Sayings of the Good Pantagruel;* the title-page says it was "composed by M. Francis Rabelais, doctor of medicine." When *The Ringing Island* came out, France was in a state of anarchy and civil war. Henry II had been killed in a tournament in 1559, at the age of forty-one; his successor, Francis II, reigned a year and a half, dying in December, 1560; the ten-year-old Charles IX was now king, with Catherine de Médicis as regent, and the religious war was approaching its height. Catherine's chancellor, de l'Hôpital, who seems to have had a good deal of respect for liberty of conscience, launched a policy of toleration that

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the Protestants apparently found satisfactory. In January, 1562, he issued an edict granting them the right of assembly, limited only by conditions quite simple and reasonable, amounting to no more than stipulations for peaceable and decent behaviour. This was a considerable concession; the Protestants accepted it, but the Catholics rose against it as an intolerable compromise with heresy—this, at least, was the official colour that they gave to their insurrection. As a matter of fact, they had more substantial grievances. The Protestants, who had rapidly increased in numbers, had behaved badly. Wherever they had a local majority, they had set themselves fanatically at work to extirpate practices that they considered idolatrous and superstitious; they appropriated church buildings, destroyed statuary, ruined glass and carvings; they showed themselves, in short, thoroughly possessed of the intolerant, grasping, and vicious spirit exhibited in full at Geneva. The Catholics resisted de l'Hôpital's edict; and both Catholics and Protestants showed themselves alike resentful of further measures of accommodation which he proposed, and which seem, in the circumstances, to have been somewhat quixotic. There is no need to review the terrible scenes that ensued. The thing to be remarked is that the anger of the Protestants was directed not only against the Catholics for their disregard of the edict of toleration, but also against the

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courts which by various devices had virtually nullified the edict.

The first sixteen chapters of the Fifth Book—the portion published in 1562—was a good tract for the times, being made up of two episodes; one in very searching criticism of the practices and secular aims of the Catholic Church, and the other in even more searching criticism of the practice of the law, which had become rudely commercialized under the huckstering policy of the later Valois sovereigns. The first episode is that of Pantagruel's stay in the Ringing Island, and the second is that of Pantagruel's party falling into the clutches of Gripe-men-all, the archduke of the Furred Law-cats. Neither needs any special explanation or comment to make it intelligible to a modern reader; they are plain and explicit. One must at once be struck, in fact, by the very modern character of the indictments in the second episode; there is hardly anything in it that one does not find immediately applicable to legislative ideals and practices of the present time. The grievances canvassed in the first episode are no longer so flagrant, but legislative reform still lags far behind ecclesiastical reform. "'Our laws are like cobwebs,'" explains Gripe-men-all. "'Your silly little flies are stopped, caught and destroyed therein, but your stronger ones break them, and force and carry them which way they please. Likewise, don't think we are so mad as to set up our nets to snap up

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your great robbers and tyrants; no, they are somewhat too hard for us, there's no meddling with them, for they would make no more of us than we make of the little ones.' " When Panurge, who has been, as we say, "railroaded," and is undergoing the "third degree," protests his innocence, Gripe-men-all cries, " 'Dost thou prate here of being innocent, as if thou could'st be delivered from our racks and tortures for being so?' "

> 'Dost thou think,' continued my lord, 'thou'rt in the wilderness of your foolish university, wrangling and bawling among the idle wandering searchers and hunters after truth? By gold, we have here other fish to fry; we go another-gates way to work, that we do. By gold, people here must give categorical answers to what they don't know. By gold, they must confess they have done those things which they have not, nor ought to have done. By gold, they must protest that they know what they never knew in their lives; and after all, patience perforce must be their only remedy.'

The balance of the Fifth Book is made up of short sketches; it ends with the arrival of Pantagruel's party at the Oracle of the Holy Bottle, the delivery of the Word of the Bottle to Panurge, and a chapter of general good advice from the priestess of the Bottle, on dismissing the party. It is a rather lame and perfunctory termination; on the face of it one cannot help thinking that the architectonic skill of the artist must have somewhat failed him.

But the question of the Fifth Book's authenticity is

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as yet open, and apparently a long way from settlement. All information at present available seems only to enable scholars to disagree as heartily as at any time hitherto. We think there is pretty good general agreement that some editor put together a number of notes or drafts that were found more or less well worked out among Rabelais's papers, polished them up, filled them out, and made them into the Fifth Book. But just what, and how much, of this collaboration belongs to Rabelais, and what is the editor's, is very hard to say. We ourselves have no opinion about this; we are not competent to have one, because this kind of question must be dealt with so largely by methods of subjective criticism, or what is sometimes called in disparagement "impressionist" criticism. We are great believers in impressionist criticism; the reader has no doubt already noticed our use of it. But no one, however well he may know a language that is not his own, can ever get far enough towards the native feel of that language to pretend to deal with the extremely delicate matters that mean so much in the identification of characteristic style and manner. The thing is absolutely impossible; none but a native can have either a native use or a native sense of any vernacular. To illustrate what we mean, when one is reading, say, one of Joseph Conrad's novels, one stumbles over sentence after sentence of perfect English, fine English, noble English, yet an English that one would know, and

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swear by all the saints in the calendar, that no English-speaking person wrote or could write; it simply would not and could not occur to a native writer to write in just that way. Now, our point is that this kind of thing is not regularly and surely detectable by any but a native critic; and that any piecemeal criticism of the Fifth Book's authenticity must depend largely on the exercise of this detective sense. We would not give two pins for the opinion of M. Scherer, M. Taine, or even of Gaston Boissier himself, on a question of this kind affecting an English classic; and on a question of this kind affecting the Fifth Book, none but a French-speaking critic's opinion is worth a straw, unless by sheer accident.

There are other interesting questions about the Fifth Book, however, that the English-speaking reader may be asked to notice. Du Verdier, a good bibliographer and a contemporary, attributes the editorship of the book to "a scholar of Valence," and Louis Guyon, in 1604, says that he was in Paris when *The Ringing Island* came out, and knew who the author was, and that "he was not a physician." It is true, in fact, that the Fifth Book is exceptional in containing nothing to show that the author had any knowledge of either medicine or theology. Yet the author knew Rabelais's country, was well versed in the lore of antiquity, and did not correct the proofs of the 1562 edition, which Rabelais, being nine years dead, could of course not

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have done. There are certainly few traces of Rabelais's solid erudition in the book, and very few of the technical terms that he knew so well how to use and liked to use. It seems a little odd, too, though not wholly beyond reasonable explanation, that *The Ringing Island* should have been published separately and then followed in so short a time by the complete book; why not the complete book at once? Some critics, indeed, have thought that the fact of *The Ringing Island's* being so good a tract for the times is evidence against its authenticity. Then again between the two editions there are certain changes affecting, not passages, but whole chapters, that are hard to account for.

Nothing of all this, however, makes against the theory that the Fifth Book represents fragments of Rabelais's writing; some, like *The Ringing Island*, more carefully worked out than others, though none, probably, worked out in final form; and the whole put together by another hand, a hand which did its work sometimes well, but as a rule poorly. Very probably these fragments are intended episodes that Rabelais jotted down more or less roughly, and then for some reason rejected; it seems rather unlikely, for instance, that after publishing the magnificent, the incomparably delightful episodes of the Island of Papimany and the trial of Bridlegoose in the previous Books, he meant to go back over so much of the same ground again in the Ringing Island and the episode of Gripe-men-all.

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Perhaps he had the two sketches together, looked both over, chose the better one and worked it up, and laid the other aside; it seems likely, indeed, that he would have had to work both up fairly well before he could decide which was the better, and so left the Ringing Island and the story of the Furred Law-cats in fairly printable shape. M. Clouzot's views on Rabelais's habits of work are undoubtedly sound, and they would bear out this conjecture. In the preface to one of his scientific works, Rabelais speaks of himself as an inveterate note-taker but disinclined to the labour of working up his notes. Probably he took notes for his imaginative writings in the same fashion, jotting down suggested ideas, stories, scenes and quotations when anything good came along—as for instance in conversation at the table of d'Estissac, du Bellay, St.-Ayl—and many of these scraps were no doubt left unused behind him at his death. It may thus have been largely true, as he says in the prologue to the First Book, that "in the composing of this masterly book I never lost nor bestowed any more nor any other time than what was appointed to serve me for taking of my bodily refection, that is, whilst I was eating and drinking."

While we may not venture any opinion of the Fifth Book's authenticity, based on the internal evidence of style and manner, it is open to us to remark a certain evidential value in the survival of this one particular

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imitation, if such it be, over all others. There were many; and with this one exception they all fell by the wayside promptly and dismally. We may also observe evidential value in the fact that whoever wrote the Fifth Book wrote enough like Rabelais to set up irreconcilable differences among critics. M. Villey has pointed out, for example, that while M. Lefranc is sure that the episode of the visit to the Holy Bottle can be only by Rabelais, M. Stapfer confesses that he is cruelly bored by all this part of the book. While M. Lefranc rejects the episode of the Apedefts, M. Boulenger accepts it. The supper of the Lady Lanterns, on which M. Lefranc sees the trade-mark of Rabelais many times impressed, seems to M. Sainéan, who has made an exhaustive study of it, the work of an alien hand. We ourselves would, we confess, expect a closer approach to unanimity if this matter of internal evidence were submitted to the decision of critics in whom the man of letters predominated a little more over the scholar; critics of the type, say, of M. Ernest Renan. This particular canon of probability, however, takes precedence of all others in importance, "impressionist" though it be. It is this canon which furnishes the one irrefragible argument for the unity of authorship of the Homeric poems. Again, whoever may have written the plays attributed to Shakespeare, there seems little admissible doubt that they were all written by the same hand, because there is no collateral evidence

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of another hand able to write any of them. Similarly, it would have been almost an incredible coincidence if there were alive at the same time two men who could write *The Ringing Island;* and it is utterly incredible that if there had been a second writer of that quality, he should have remained otherwise unheard-of. The moment one has anything less than a *chef-d'œuvre*, imitation becomes possible; and imitation becomes progressively easy in the degree that what one has is removed from a *chef-d'œuvre;* and a person capable of imitating a *chef-d'œuvre* would almost certainly not be imitating anything, but rather producing a *chef-d'œuvre* on his own account.

For the English-speaking reader, however, these matters have only an academic interest. If he enjoys the Fifth Book and finds in it a due measure of pantagruelism, he need be little concerned whether it is by Rabelais or by an imitator. We ourselves find "great store and abundance" of pantagruelism even beyond the two leading episodes of the Fifth Book; we find it in all but the last sixteen chapters. There is indeed even in these a vein of it which might produce in paying quantities, but we confess that when we come to it we usually turn back to exploit still further the earlier and richer deposits.

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Chapter Nine

THREE months after the publication of the Third Book, in 1546, Rabelais is heard of as residing in the city of Metz. Probably he went there in January, as soon as the book was off the press. All that is known about this is through the statement in a letter written by Jean Sturm, in March, 1546, that Rabelais had been "driven from France by the misfortune of the times" and was now at Metz. Whether he was moved by a sense of actual peril, or wished simply to escape the anxieties and unpleasantness of life in France at this period, is uncertain. He did not let anyone know he was going, not even Cardinal du Bellay, but this does not show precisely that he left in a hurry or that he was in danger; it may equally well mean that under the circumstances the least said, the better. His friends might have tried to talk him out of going, or some indiscretion might raise an obstacle against him when the time came. His choice of Metz is easily accounted for. His friend de St.-Ayl owned considerable property there, and no doubt put a habitation at his disposal. Ten years earlier, Guillaume du

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Bellay, in a letter to his brother, the cardinal, speaks of staying at Metz "in the house of M. de St.-Ayl," and the deed of gift of the property to St.-Ayl's son, Orson Laurens, shows that it amounted to a good deal. This explains the fact that from 1536 on, St.-Ayl's diplomatic errands in Germany always took him by way of Metz, either going or coming. So no doubt, while St.-Ayl went back and forth through Alsace, his friend Rabelais, whom he had entertained so pleasantly four years before on his newly-bought property near Orléans, lived at his house in Metz.

Rabelais had not been there long before he was appointed city physician. His name is found entered on the city's books for wages beginning Easter, 1546, and remarkably good wages, too, the best he ever had, $120 per annum. A curious circumstance is observable in this connexion. Late in 1546, he wrote Cardinal du Bellay for money; he had already written Sturm, who had a regular courier-service for correspondence with du Bellay, telling him to let the cardinal know where he was. He sent the request for money, however, by the hand of St.-Ayl. The cardinal acknowledged the request, and said he would send something as soon as he could find a trustworthy messenger going that way. The noteworthy thing is that both St.-Ayl and the cardinal were apparently unimpressed by any sense of urgency. St.-Ayl laid no stress whatever on Rabelais's being at all uncommonly hard up, and the cardinal

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himself treated the demand as something perfectly respectable and proper, but requiring no immediate attention. The messenger whom du Bellay evidently had in mind somehow got away without reporting to him, so the money was not sent; and in a few weeks Rabelais wrote again, this time a most pressing letter, intimating very strongly that if he did not soon hear from the cardinal, he would be obliged to join the household of one of the German princes.

It seems queer that if Rabelais were in such pitiable shape as all that, St.-Ayl should not have seen some evidence of it. Moreover, it is hard to see how at this juncture he could have been in a state of destitution or anything like it. During the first three months of the year it is conceivable that he might have been a little short, but he had had his living, and a precious good one; the St.-Ayl household ran on no pinched budget; and now he was in the best-paying place he ever held in all his life, and withal was living free of expense. Cardinal du Bellay, moreover, knew all this, and yet he did not resent his demand for money as he might naturally have done if he had understood the representation as a case of sheer gift to a man who already had enough to go on with; he did not cavil or refuse, but was merely a little slow about remitting, on account of missing connexion with a messenger.

The point seems to be that Rabelais was asking not for a gift, but for what was due him as a member

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of the du Bellay household. He still had coming to him the legacy left him by Guillaume du Bellay; and he had not been dismissed from his place in the household at Guillaume du Bellay's death—either Martin or Jean du Bellay, or both, had undertaken to look after him. Perhaps the annuity was never paid, but apart from that, Rabelais as "domestic" in the household had a right to subsidies; and this correspondence shows him reminding the cardinal of this right, so that he could "maintain myself honourably, as I have done up to the present, for the honour of the house from which I came on my departure from France." There may be a suggestion here of the fundamental understanding that supported the system of patronage, and an intimation that under that system self-respect was less in jeopardy than is commonly supposed.

The happiest, by far the happiest, outcome of recent historical research in this period is the assurance which can be accepted, we think quite without peradventure, that Rabelais had, on the whole, a very easy, comfortable, and agreeable life. Even in respect of his last three years, in which not one detail of his personal life is known, it is a little more probable than otherwise that he was comfortable and at ease. He had tastes and inclinations that money is needed to gratify directly, and money he never had; but he would be the first to acknowledge, and we believe he would acknowledge joyfully, that possessions are a burdensome

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responsibility, and that the person who is in a position measurably to gratify a cultivated taste without responsibility is in the best position of all. No doubt he did not have everything he wanted, but he must have had access to pretty nearly everything he wanted, and we do not find it hard to believe that if he had had free choice of circumstances, he would have wished his own to be but little changed.[1] As far as is known, he always lived well, was never very poor, never out of reach of help when he needed it. Any society that he chose to frequent was open to him, he made and kept the best of friendships, no extension of experience seems to have been denied him, he travelled as he wished and under conditions as favourable as if made to order, he had great respect, great honour, and he was equally and

[1] Greville's Journal bears curious testimony in the premises, in the account it gives of Thomas Creevey, the diarist and letter-writer, whose papers are as interesting to the general reader as they are useful to the historian. Writing in 1829, Greville says: "Old Creevey is rather an extraordinary character . . . he married a widow who died a few years ago; she had something, he nothing; he got into Parliament. . . . Then his wife died, upon which event he was thrown upon the world with about £200 a year, or less; no name, few connexions, a great many acquaintances, a good constitution and extraordinary spirits. He possesses nothing but his clothes; no property of any sort; he leads a vagrant life, visiting a number of people who are delighted to have him, and sometimes roving about to various places as fancy happens to direct, and staying till he has spent what money he has in his pocket. He has no servant, no home, no creditors; he buys everything as he wants it at the place he is at; he has no ties upon him, and has his time entirely at his own disposal and that of his friends. He is certainly a living proof that a man may be perfectly happy and exceedingly poor, or rather without riches, for he suffers none of the privations of poverty and enjoys many of the advantages of wealth. I think he is the only man I know in society who possesses nothing."

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eminently successful in the world of his profession, of literature and scholarship, and of society.

The establishment of all this—and it seems now established beyond doubt—is, we say, the happiest fruit of modern scientific research, for the legacy of tradition bequeathed us by criticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has carried a most unfavourable report of Rabelais's circumstances. It is instructive now to read the Variorum edition, and remark the monstrous critical extravagances of romanticism. One can hardly say whether they are more fantastic when they present Rabelais by his serious side or by his lighter side, or most of all fantastic in their disregard of the utter incongruity that appears when both sides are put together. By his serious side, romanticist criticism presents Rabelais as the great genius dominating the thought of his century—of the ages—by the immensity of his knowledge and the profundity of his "secret"; he was everywhere the revolutionary, in theology, philosophy, morals, political theory; he was the incomparable satirist, the reformer, the pamphleteer, lampooning without mercy the great of the earth and their cherished institutions. At the same time, he was the low roisterer of—

wickd Rablias's dronken revellings

—a poor scared fugitive and outcast, a scorned, poverty-stricken, miserable devil, living on the very selvage-edge of society!

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II

There is an entry in the city records of Metz, quoted by the excellent archivist Paul Ferry, showing that on 24 June, 1547, Rabelais was paid his salary as physician, and "dismissed" (*congédié*). One does not know just how to take this "dismissal"; the word may mean simply that he was paid off, having left his place of his own accord. There is no apparent reason why he should have been discharged, and there is one why he should have resigned. Cardinal du Bellay was about to go to Rome again, and doubtless recalled Rabelais from Metz to go with him; he was in need of a physician as never before; his life in Italy during the ensuing two years, seems, between sciatica and malaria, to have been a martyr's existence.

Du Bellay left Rheims for Italy 27 July, 1547; Rabelais may have joined him at Paris, Rheims, or Lyons. Leaving Metz late in June, he could easily have reached Paris by the tenth of July; and there is a vague suggestion in a letter from Italy that he was there on that day. At all events it seems likely that he stopped by at Lyons early in August, and there delivered to a publisher the manuscript of his almanac for 1548, and also that of the first eleven chapters of the Fourth Book—in very rough and imperfect shape, even ending on a broken sentence—(the portion which

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was published separately five months later, anticipating by four years the publication of the complete Fourth Book).[1] Du Bellay stopped at Ferrara and Bologna on his way down, and arrived at Rome 27 September, where he remained for two years at the head of French affairs in the papal court. The only records of Rabelais during this time are that on 18 June, 1548, he cashed a draft issued at Paris on an Italian bank, for thirty-two gold écus, and that on 14 March, 1549, he witnessed a great festivity given at Rome by the cardinal in honour of the birth of Henry II's second son. The draft was bought by a certain Arnauld Combraglia from the bank of Delbenne in Paris and cashed by the house of Benvenuto Olivieri at Rome; but no one knows what transaction it represented. The festivity was a most elaborate affair. Rabelais wrote a detailed account of it to the cardinal of Guise, so vivid, brilliant, and interesting that it was immediately published by Gryphe, at Lyons, under the title *Sciomachie;* as a specimen of journalistic reporting, it is hardly to be matched. The programme was made up of a sham battle, a feast lasting until midnight, and then a ball. One

[1] It seems altogether likely that Rabelais left the manuscript partly for safe-keeping and partly for examination. Publishers then as now were used to getting their copy piecemeal, and did not always care to see the whole of a work before accepting it. It is possible that the publisher was unscrupulous, and published the fragment prematurely, to skim the market; perhaps there is an indication of this in the fact that the fragment published at Lyons bore no publisher's name, and the complete Fourth Book was not published at Lyons, but at Paris, by Fezendat.

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would like to know what the whole affair cost. The original plan called for a sham naval battle as well; but this had to be given up on account of a sudden flood in the Tiber.

> The arrangement of this fight was such that fifty small vessels, such as foists, galiots, gondolas and armed frigates should attack a huge monstrous galleon, made up of the two largest vessels in the navy . . . after several stratagems, assaults, repulses, and other events usual in naval warfare, they were to set fire to the said galleon in the evening. There would have been a terrible bonfire, seeing the great number and quantity of fireworks that had been put within.

Everything seems to have been planned regardless of expense; no wonder France was facing a little stringency, since one may take this sort of thing as a symptom. An interesting point in Rabelais's letter is in his description of the fireworks; one somehow does not think of fireworks, particularly set-pieces, as having reached the stage of such high and diverse development at that time, notwithstanding that Italians were always extravagantly fond of fireworks, apparently, as they still are:

> The two following evenings, fireworks were displayed on the public square, with a quantity of artillery, and such a diversity of artificial fire that it was something marvellous; such as huge balls, huge mortars casting each time more than five hundred rockets and fuses, fire-wheels, fire-mills, clouds of fire full of flashing stars, catherine-wheels, some loaded, other reciprocat-

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ing, and a hundred other kinds. Everything was produced by the invention of the aforesaid Vincentio, and Bois-le-Court, the great saltpetre-manufacturer in Maine.

Another item worth noticing, perhaps, is Rabelais's testimony to the orderly and honourable behaviour of the Roman crowds:

> In this tournament and festival, I noted two remarkble things. One is that there was no quarrel, debate, dissension or tumult of any kind. The other is that of the quantity of silver plate, on which so many people of different conditions were served, there was nothing lost or missed.

III

It is strange—strange because most of the time he was by no means in positions of obscurity—strange and disappointing that from the day Rabelais left Metz to the day of his death, that is, from 24 June, 1547, to 9 April, 1553, absolutely all that is known of him is: that he cashed a draft; that he witnessed the festivity aforesaid; that he was at St.-Maur in the autumn of 1550; that he received two small benefices, and of one of them at least, he never assumed the duties; that he held these benefices two years, almost to the day, and then resigned them; also, finally, that he published the Fourth Book. Beyond these few isolated

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facts, nothing whatever is known of him or of his doings.

Cardinal du Bellay left Rome 22 September, 1549, to return to France; his influence with the French court had weakened, and he had been virtually superseded in his official status at Rome; he was even uncertain of the kind of reception that Henry II would accord him. On 20 November, at Lyons, he was met by letters from Henry, ordering him to go back to Rome to attend the electoral conclave called in consequence of the death of the pope, Paul III. He returned by ship from Marseilles to Leghorn, thence by land to Rome. Rabelais in all probability had come up from Italy with him, but did not return; for there is record that du Bellay fell very ill at Scarperia in the midsummer of 1550, and having been unsatisfactorily treated by a local doctor, sent word to the duke of Florence, imploring his aid in finding a good physician; and this of course would not have happened if his own physician were with him.

No one knows why Rabelais did not continue with du Bellay, or what became of him. He may have been ill, or in some way unequal to the journey; he was no longer young. He was certainly with du Bellay again at St.-Maur in the autumn of 1550, when the cardinal was recuperating; this is clear from a passage in the dedication of the Fourth Book. Early in January, 1551, du Bellay gave him the curacy of Meudon, and

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also that of St.-Christophe-de-Jambet, which one of his successors, in the seventeenth century, called "the most miserable and the poorest parish in Maine, inhabited by poor and needy people, and the greater part of it left deserted and abandoned, by reason of the poverty of the people and the unyielding soil." Perhaps it was a little better a century earlier. It does not appear that Rabelais ever performed any of the duties of either curacy except by proxy; and after Rabelais had paid the salary of an acting curate, there could have been little left for him. Still, with du Bellay and de Châtillon looking after him, there is in this no great argument that he was in poverty or distress of any kind. He kept both curacies for two years, and three months before his death, he resigned them; no one knows why.

In October, 1552, there was a rumour in circulation at Lyons that Rabelais had been thrown into prison. Early in November, a member of Cardinal de Tournon's suite wrote a friend that "they say Francis Rabelais has been put in chains and imprisoned. What about it? Let me know if it is only an empty and idle rumour." Later in the month he writes another correspondent that he believes the story is but a fable; that no one at Lyons seems really to know anything about it, and so many rumours are flying about that it is hard to keep track of them; but he has written several persons to look it up for him. Finally, early in

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December he writes, "I have heard nothing of Rabelais."

A very reasonable probability is that during the last three years of his life—a period of great public turmoil and anxiety—Rabelais lived in retirement at Paris, in the house "rue des Jardins." In a considerable historical work published nearly a century later, de St.-Romuald says that Rabelais's death "did not take place in his parish as has been commonly believed up to now, but at Paris, in a house on the rue des Jardins; and he was buried in St.-Paul's churchyard, at the foot of a tree which may be seen there today. This is the account which the sieur Patin, learned physician of Paris, had from the late M. d'Espesse, State councillor and ambassador to Holland, who had it from the late M. le président d'Espesse, his father."

The traditional date of his death, 9 April, 1553, rests upon the authority that we have cited in our preface; it is no doubt correct. In the same month Cardinal du Bellay set forth on his last pilgrimage to Italy, to end his days in Rome; and Rabelais, as M. Clouzot observes, must be either dead or ill, for the cardinal to leave behind him his associate of twenty years.

IV

In the half-century after Rabelais's death, his work was immensely popular; it ran through twenty-five edi-

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tions. The words *pantagruelism, pantagruelist,* were in all men's mouths. Pantagruel was cited as one of a list of popular personages, in a pamphlet of 1537. Pantagruel and Panurge were the heroes of the anonymous tale, *Pantagruel's Disciple,* that appeared in 1538, and was many times reprinted. *Pantagruel's Dream,* a story in verse, came out in 1542. A French man-of-war was named *Pantagruel.* Rabelais's work was praised no less for its wisdom and erudition than for its brilliance and humour; the Third Book especially had established him firmly as a man of learning. Gilbert Ducher praised him as a philosopher; Pasquier called him "the nonpareil" whose glory in no way yielded to that of an Alexander, putting him above all writers of his time in maturity of judgment. Marc Papillon called him "the unique" and "the divine," and his books were read to the ten-year-old king, Charles IX, to the great scandal of the Spanish ambassador.

This was the beginning of one side of the twofold tradition that grew up around his work. The other side began with Scaliger, Postel, de Puy-Herbault, Calvin, Billon, and du Val. Its growth was helped on by all the malevolence of an irritated and assiduous ecclesiasticism. Catholic and Protestant, at the sword's point with each other on all other matters, could unite on this one. Rabelais was "the plague and gangrene of devotion," according to a spokesman for the newly-

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hatched and energetic order of the Jesuits. He was the author of "the most vicious book of the time"; it was a "libertine's manual." Scaliger and Calvin were sufficient authority for either Catholic or Protestant who wished to fertilize the legend of an atheist-propagandist Rabelais, a low-lived drunken vagabond and social outcast.

Circumstances favoured the growth of this latter legend; the general climate of opinion and sentiment fostered it. Much more than the religious wars in France, more than the conflict-at-large of Rome and Geneva, the thing that prevailed against Rabelais, that could not but prevail against him, was the rise of a bourgeois society. Rabelais's reputation could hold out against a hundred Scaligers, a thousand de Puy-Herbaults and Garasses, but it could not hold out against a Tiraqueau. The chief internal characteristic of a bourgeois society is a silent, dogged, implacable resentment of superiority; in such a society, as Mr. Mill so well said, the test of a great mind is agreeing in the opinions of small minds; and against this nothing can be done. The real terrors of such a society do not consist in any shift of power from one class to another, in the displacing of one class by another, as many think they do, but in the levelling-down of all classes into an undistinguished homogeneity through a slow, stubborn, mechanical insistence on conformity to what is established by the lowest common denominator of intelligence,

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taste, and character. It was only Toulouse, the bourgeois city *par excellence*, that for two years prohibited Rabelais's works from entrance within its gates. Rabelais could keep a foothold in the civilization of his own day. Those who guided its destinies may have been ever so foolish, short-sighted, perhaps wicked—anything one likes to say—but in their position they had none of the uneasy, self-righteous, self-conscious, censorious disposition of the parvenu. In the succeeding civilization, therefore, obviously, he had no place.

As the spirit of this civilization began to assert itself upon literature, Rabelais's influence waned. In the seventeenth century, he began to be read, when read at all, in secret; such interest as he elicited was pretty generally of the kind that one would expect a bourgeois society to show. Some of the larger spirits—Molière, La Fontaine, Racine—were much in his debt and said so; but general society was preoccupied with an artificial and formal correctness, and those who wished to make a figure in it turned from him with ostentatious disdain. In the nineteenth century, as we have remarked, romanticism, where it occupied itself with Rabelais at all, mostly erected on the stupid legend of the dissolute pariah the equally stupid legend of the audacious revolutionary. One or two of the greater writers gave him something like his due; Chateaubriand did, and Michelet; but they were few. Victor Hugo

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complimented him perfunctorily, but seems never to have read him.

Outside France, he has been really influential only in England; and that is through the providential accident of his availability in an incomparable translation. Almost from the beginning of the nineteenth century, in fact, the English-speaking reader has enjoyed an immense advantage over the French reader. Rabelais's French is somewhat archaic even for his own period, and relatively few Frenchmen of today can read it, just as few Englishmen or Americans can read Chaucer's English; while anyone who can read the Bible can read the Urquhart and Motteux translation. Rabelais has not been widely known or generally appreciated in the bourgeois civilization of England; but a thin line of continuators, a kind of apostolic succession, seems to have gone on, fairly well unbroken, mostly at the universities, in particular at Oxford. He was always well-known and respected in the Low Countries. Italy knew him; he has had no influence on German letters, and he was translated into Spanish but a few years ago. In the United States, the development of the bourgeois society's ideals to their full logical length has left him perforce unknown; where there is no interest in the practice of the humane life, there can be, naturally, no interest in its great practitioners. Reprints of some variant of the Urquhart and Motteux translation now and then appear, usually in cheap form and circulated

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more or less surreptitiously, and sometimes there are limited de luxe issues put out to exploit the more affluent end of the market for scabrous tales; we are informed that it is a commonplace of the bookselling trade that these issues must be illustrated with erotic pictures in order to sell successfully! Aside from those who represent this special interest, there are few in the United States who have any acquaintance with Rabelais or who know anything about him.[1]

V

Who are those in any society who should know him, who would find themselves a thousandfold compensated for the trouble of surmounting whatever obstacles might stand in the way of his acquaintance? Rabelais seemed aware that he would forever be the property of a particular order of persons; he picks out a

[1] At the time of writing this, we notice an advertisement of the serial publication in the *Forum* of Anatole France's South American lectures on Rabelais. It furnishes an excellent example of the conventional appeal to the kind of market we speak of. It is headed, "Rabelais, the Great Buffoon," and goes on—

> "Of Rabelais, who pretended to be mad, and in his pretensions dared anything. Rabelais, the escaped monk, the wandering vagabond, the ferocious clown . . . who played with words as a child plays with stones, piling them up, affronting society, shocking his king. Who thought more and better than his entire century . . . dissected that century with his gigantic probings . . . played, even in seriousness, the immense buffoon—and died a-clowning."

Of this it is probably enough to say that if the United States had a correlative of the Pure Food Law, making the misrepresentation of spiritual food a criminal offense, the proprietors of the *Forum* would now be in the penitentiary, where we think they should be.

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particular order, addresses himself to them particularly, even exclusively. He always addresses them under a ribald figure; taking his words as they stand, one would say that he regarded himself as a special property of the disreputable elements in society. "Most noble and illustrious drinkers," are the very first words of the prologue of the First Book, "and you thrice-precious pockified blades (for to you and none else do I dedicate my writings)." The Fifth Book opens with a like exordium: "Indefatigable topers, and you thrice-precious martyrs of the smock, give me leave to put a serious question to your worships while you are idly stroking your codpieces, and I myself not much better employed." It is in these terms that he invariably appraises his chosen audience: "good fellows"; "honest topers"; "good people, most illustrious drinkers, and you thrice-precious gouty gentlemen"; it would seem indeed, as we say, that he jealously confined his confidence to a social order that one would regard, on the face of it, as perhaps least meritorious. We have a great horror of fancifulness in the "interpretation" of Rabelais, and the reader, we think, will bear us out that we have afflicted him with very little of it, but on the contrary, that we have quite resolutely restrained the exuberance of our wisdom about a great many matters that no one knows or can possibly know. Having used our reader thus scrupulously, we may perhaps, on taking leave of him, ask him to countenance one lit-

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tle flight of fancy about Rabelais's reiterated specification of the kind of people to whom he chose to belong.

His choice turns our minds back upon a historical incident that in some respects may furnish a parallel. When the *Santissimo Salvatore* told the representatives of everything most influential and distinguished in Judæan society that "the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you," we never understood him to imply that there was any saving virtue *per se* in either tax-collecting or harlotry. We understand him only to be remarking the effect of one incidental spiritual advantage, and a very great one, that did inhere in those occupations. They conferred upon those who professed them a pretty complete social immunity for their views, beliefs, opinions, for their freedom to express them and to live by them. The representative people did not have this immunity; they were under severe pressure at almost every point in their lives to conform to some prescribed standard of thought, belief, and behaviour. It would have been a very serious matter for them to become disciples of John, the irregular, desert-wandering preacher of repentance; it would have brought every social and ecclesiastical sanction into instant alignment against them. One may imagine, in a parallel case, what would happen if the archbishop of New York and Mr. J. P. Morgan suddenly trailed off after some prophet of Mormonism, for reason and conscience's sake. The

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tax-gatherers and harlots, on the other hand, were quite free, for all that society and its institutions cared, to follow their reason and conscience; they had no position to lose, no pressure to resist, no criticism to encounter. Spiritually, they were encysted in society; they were not of it.

It appears to us, then, that under this figure of the "most noble and illustrious drinkers, and you thrice-precious pockified blades," Rabelais declares his enduring affinity with the alien spirits, of whom there are always some in every society, who at any sacrifice resist, or rather, quietly elude, all pressure towards conformity, towards standardization and mechanization of thought, sentiment or belief; those who, in Plato's phrase, wish only "to see things as they are," to let the stream of consciousness play free and undirected upon whatever phenomena may present themselves before it. The person, like the publican or the harlot, who to start with is emancipated from all but the mere coarse legalities of social control, is in the best position to exercise this freedom, and he may therefore serve as a type, a sort of allegory; and all the more because in a bourgeois society all joy seems to be a peculium of the disreputable. Possibly it was thus that Rabelais's instinct led him to apostrophize his "pockified blades" as thrice-precious. Whether so or not, however, it is in fact the spirit which has the wish and resolution at any cost to maintain itself inviolate, free, superior to chance and

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circumstance, immune to every debilitating contagion of the mass-mind and mass-temper—it is this spirit which will find forever in Francis Rabelais a true, mighty, and unfailing friend.

May his dear shade look indulgently on the imperfections of the portrait that we have made of him!

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